

Disappearance of
Innocence



Disappearance of Innocence by zeusfluff

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Completely AU.

1. Disappearance of Innocence

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Author: Zeusfluff

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Chapter 1: Unknown Identity

March 18th, 1985

Hawkins, Indiana

It was dark on the road out of town, so Hopper turned his lights on and continued driving. When he rounded a corner, he saw a lump of fabric on the side of the road. As he got closer, he saw that it was a woman in a white nightgown.

Quickly stopping the truck, he grabbed a flashlight. When he got to her, he leaned down, putting a hand on her shoulder. "Miss can you hear me?"

When Hopper got no response he became worried. It wasn't far going back into town. Carefully scooping the unconscious woman in his arms, he carried her back towards his truck. As he opened the back of his truck and placed her inside, he noticed she had a trail of blood trickling down her right nostril of her nose. Pulling a handkerchief from his pocket, he wiped the blood away. He then draped a blanket over the woman and closed the door. It was another ten minutes until they reached the hospital. Exiting the car, Hopper went around to the back and opened up the door. Scooping the unconscious woman into

his arms once more, he went in through the emergency room doors. A nurse and a doctor met them shortly thereafter. The doctor was the one to speak. "What happened?"

Hopper shook his head. "I don't know. I found her on the side of the road unconscious while I was driving home."

The doctor in front of Hopper took the unknown woman from his arms and placed her onto a stretcher. "What's her name chief?"

Hopper sighed and kept looking at the seemingly frail woman in front of him. "I don't know. Is she going to be ok?"

The police chief quickly read the nameplate on the white lab coat the doctor was wearing. *E. Thompson M.D.* Doctor Thompson nodded. "We'll take care of her. We'll keep you updated." Hopper nodded and turned away. "Alright thanks doc."

"El I'm sorry I didn't signal. There was an emergency I had to take care of."

By now, Hopper had taken his coat and hat off, placing both on the coat rack by the door. El glared at him from the kitchen table. "You told me you would be home by 6:15. Besides, I know why your late. I saw you with that woman you found on the side of the road. She's like me."

Pulling two pot roast and carrot meals from the freezer, he paused. "What do you mean she's *like* you El?"

El now looked serious. "She has numbers on her wrist like I do. 027."

Now it was Hopper's turn to look serious, and he swallowed. "If she's like you El, I can't leave her in the hospital without someone to watch over her."

El had tears in her eyes. But she didn't let them fall. "The bad men will come for her."

Hopper didn't like where this was going. "I won't let that happen. I promise."

"Morning doc. How's the woman I brought in doing?"

Sighing Doctor Thompson ushered him toward the woman's room. "She still hasn't woken up yet. She's very lucky you found her when you did chief. It was cold out last night and she might have died if you hadn't found her."

Now it was Hopper's turn to sigh. "Here I was hoping I could ask her some questions about what happened to her. See if she could remember anything."

Doctor Thompson furrowed his eyebrows and looked at the woman's file. "There is something strange that I did notice when I examined her. The number 027 tattooed on her right wrist."

Hopper became nervous but didn't show it. "Alright doc, keep me posted. Do you mind if I sit with her?" Doctor Thompson nodded his head. "Sure thing chief."

Hopper would have to do a little more digging. He had to find out who this woman was. Hawkins lab had obviously kidnapped her. Hopper stepped into the woman's room and took a seat next to the bed. "I won't let those men take you. That's a promise. I will do everything I can to protect you."

Looking up as the door opened, Hopper saw a familiar face step into the room. "Doc, what are you doing here?"

A smile came to Doctor Owens face. "I work here. Believe it or not before the government tried to bribe me with their insane scheme to open up a hole to the upside down and let monsters out, I was a well-respected Neurologist."

Hopper frowned, shaking his head. "Why won't she wake up? Do you know why?" Owens spread his hands and shrugged his shoulders. "Sometimes its hard to tell. For now all we can do is keep monitoring her progress. I'll see ya later Jim."

"Hey kiddo. Got you some more Eggos. What's wrong?"

El looked sad. She was trying not to cry. But the tears were coming. "You have to help that woman. Something's wrong."

Hopper grabbed El by the shoulders and looked into her eyes. "What did you see sweetheart?"

El swallowed and sat down on the sofa. "I was looking for you. I saw the doctor that took care of Will after the soldiers rescued you from the upside down. She was shaking."

Hopper's heart sank. The woman he'd saved was in trouble. He knew when to heed El's warning.

Hopper had just entered the hospital, and he was heading towards the unknown woman's room. He frowned and tapped on the window when he saw Owens inside. He quickly came out. "Jim. Now is not a good time to sit with her."

Nodding, Hopper took a seat next to the door, Owens taking the next seat over from him. "What happened?"

Owens took a breath and then spoke. "She had a couple of seizures last night. She couldn't breathe on her own and so we had to put her on a vent. We're keeping an eye on her. Let's talk more in my office."

Hopper followed Owens down the hallway and into his office. It wasn't very big, but it was somewhere private to talk. The aging doctor offered a place to sit in front of his desk.

"Have a seat Jim."

Taking a seat, he was surprised to find a cup of coffee in his hands all of a sudden. "Coffee, black. Two sugars. This job is a lot less stressful than the last one. All I have to worry about here are my patients. And paperwork. But different kinds. What I wanted to show you was this."

Owens handed Hopper the unknown woman's medical file, and he flipped it open. "What do these red markings mean?"

Hopper wasn't sure he understood what he was looking at. The photo anyways. Sam leaned forward and outlined the photo with his right

index finger. "This is the inside of her brain. The red markings mean there's activity going on inside. They do concern me."

Hopper knew that wasn't a good sign. But it was the next photo that made him think. It was an x-ray scan. "Ok, I'm looking at an x-ray scan. What does that mean exactly?"

Sighing, Sam pointed towards the center of the bone. "Her bones are still forming. I can tell just by looking at this scan, that this woman is 20."

Hopper creased his forehead. "She's barely an adult. Either she was kidnapped by the lab or she ran away and then they kidnapped her. I'll see what I can dig up on her. It'd be nice if we could circulate a photo of her, see if anyone recognizes her. But that would tip-off the lab. Which they know she's missing. We have to protect her from them."

Sam looked nervous. "I'll do my best to protect her. You know if they find me here, they'll kill me. You do know that right?"

Hopper nodded. "Oh I do know that doc. Believe me. But you've done right. You helped my girl out. I thank you for that."

Owens tried to read Hopper. He had an idea. "I see the wheels in your head turning. Want to share with the class Jim?"

Sighing, Hopper placed his empty coffee mug down on the desk in front of him. "We may have to move her somewhere safe. Somewhere, where those men won't find her. You are most definitely coming with doc. How soon can she come off the vent? When can we move her?"

Sam sat heavily in his chair for a few agonizing seconds before he answered. "A couple of days at least. I want to see how she responds to being taken off the vent first. I want to see if she's able to breathe on her own. Then if we get the green light, we'll go from there ok chief-o?"

Hopper didn't seem satisfied with Sam's answer. "How about tomorrow night. Do we have a deal?"

Sam shook hands with Hopper. "I'll call you the minute we have her off the vent."

Taking his hat and placing it on his head, he nodded his thanks to Owens. "Ok doc, let me know."

To Be Continued...

2. Escaping into hiding

Chapter 2: Escaping into hiding

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own an original. Date Started: 7/31/19. Date Finished: 8/2/19. Enjoy!

Hopper had been too impatient to wait for Owens to call him about the unknown woman he'd brought in. He sat outside the room and peered in through the window, watching the doctor working. He almost held his breath as he continued watching as everything unfolded in front of him.

"Shana, I want you to disconnect her from the vent. Stand by with twenty percent supplemental oxygen. On my count, one, two, three."

Carefully disconnecting the tubing from the woman's throat, Owens waited ten seconds. He sighed in relief when she took a breath all on her own. He spoke to her, hoping she could hear him. "Good girl. There we go."

Exiting the room, he found Hopper sitting just outside. "I see you couldn't wait for my call."

Hopper shook his head and fiddled with his pack of cigarettes. "I couldn't wait. So what's her prognosis doc?"

Crossing his arms, Owens nodded and sighed. "She's breathing on her own. But she still hasn't woken up. I've tried all the methods that I could think of to wake her. None of them worked."

Stuffing the pack of cigs back in his pocket, Hopper gave a dismayed sigh. "Ok doc, gather as many things as you need and help me get her to the car. I'm parked out back."

It was twenty minutes before Owens had everything he needed and

was helping Hopper with the woman into his truck. Sam climbed into the back with her as Hopper shut the door. When Hopper climbed into the drivers seat and shut the door, the doc in the back spoke. "Hey chief-o, you got someplace I can hang this iv bag?"

Hopper looking in the rear view mirror, nodded. "There's a hook up above the back door doc."

As Hopper drove, he kept looking back at Owens who sat quietly back. Before long, they had reached the cabin, Hopper hopped out of the truck and took the stairs by twos, giving El the secret knock. The door unlocked and opened up. This giving a few minutes for Hopper and Owens to get the woman into the house. Once she was settled inside the house, Hopper inquired about the tube in the woman's nose.

"What's the tube for doc?"

Sam looked serious. "Feeding tube. She's not able to eat by mouth. She's going to need a lot of care right now. Will you help me out?"

Hopper seemed more than nervous, but nodded. "What do you want me to do doc?"

Owens finished setting up his supplies on a side table. "She'll need to eat soon. Do you have any soup?"

Hopper was confused now. "How are you going to give her the soup?" Sam took a large syringe out of his bag, without the needle attached to it. "With this."

Finally understanding, Hopper got up and went to find a can of soup in the cupboard. El came out of her room right then and sunk down on the far right of the couch. While Owens sat on the far left next to the bed. He turned his attention to El and gave her a smile. "Hi El. How's it going?"

El gave a small smile. "Good."

Sam watched as Hopper finished cooking the soup for the unconscious woman in the bed. "How's it coming with the soup Jim?"

Hopper was just pouring the liquid into a bowl. "I hope chicken soup is ok." Looking into the bowl, the doctor shook his head. "This isn't going to cut it chief-o. It needs to be blended. It needs to be pure liquid."

Sighing and a bit frustrated, Hopper took the soup back. "Let me find the blender doc."

Owens could see El watching the unconscious woman. "She's very sick."

El's eyes widened. "Sleeping?"

Sam nodded his head and sighed. "I don't know when she's going to wake up. But she's safe. Your dad and I will make sure of that."

El gave a look of confidence and nodded. "Yes. But she has to get better right?"

The doctor nodded his head in agreement. "Yes, but it might be awhile."

Hopper woke from a light slumber when he heard a thud in the living room. As he pulled back the curtain serving as a door to his room, he saw Owens leaning down next to El. He felt his breath catch in his throat. "Doc what happened?"

Shrugging his shoulders, Sam took El's pulse. "I don't know. She just came out of her room and collapsed. Help me get her to the couch Jim."

Worry etched the police chief's face. Turning the light on as soon they both got El onto the couch, he saw that her face was covered in sweat. Hopper held his breath as El began to stir. She began to cry as she opened her eyes. "Hurts!"

Hopper took El's face in his hands and spoke to her. "What hurts sweetie?"

The young girl hugged herself and cried more. Hopper tried again. "Where does it hurt?"

El did her best to point to her side. The doctor next to Hopper gave a nervous look then turned his attention to El. "Can you show me where it hurts?"

Grabbing for Sam's hand, El showed him. Taking a breath, he was putting the puzzle pieces together. "It's her appendix Jim. It needs to come out."

Hopper paled and lowered himself to the floor. "Your going to take it out right?"

The aging doctor gave Hopper a confident nod. "It hasn't burst yet. I can get it out. I'm going to need you to boil some water though."

Hopper turned back to El. "Don't worry El. I've got ya. Your going to sleep for a little while so the doc here can fix you up. When you wake up again, you'll be all better."

El let more tears flow. "I don't like the dark."

Hopper closed his eyes and then opened them. "Don't worry I'll be right here with you ok?"

Hopper nodded to Owens and he gave El something so she could sleep. He watched as her eyes fluttered shut. Placing a kiss to her forehead he spoke. "It's gonna be ok kid. I promise."

Turning his gaze back over to Sam, Hopper noticed he was taking things out of a duffle bag. "Where'd you get all that stuff doc?"

Stopping momentarily, the doctor gave a smirk. "I went on a shopping spree to drug lock up. Then I went up to the surgical floor. Have to be prepared for anything."

Hopper took Owens explanation and went to boil some water. This was going to be a long night.

Hopper sat in a chair next to the couch, keeping vigil by El's sleeping form. "Listen kid, your the best thing that's come into my life since... Well since my little girl Sarah. Before you came into my life, I sat alone in a black hole for six years. I did everything I could to erase the pain I was feeling. But pain is part of living. It sometimes takes

time to heal. But pain sometimes leaves a scar, a scar that itches from time to time..."

The lights in the living room started to flicker, making both Sam and Hopper look up. But Owens was the first to speak. "Can El use her powers in her sleep?"

Hopper shook his head. "I don't think so. Which means one of them is waking up."

Looking back to Sam, Hopper asked his question. "How much sedative did you give El?"

Owens looked at Hopper with a serious look. "Enough to keep her asleep for eight hours."

The two men in the living room turned their attention to the woman in the bed. Hopper's eyes widened. "It must be her."

To Be Continued...

3. Unknown Surroundings

Chapter 3: Unknown Surroundings

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/2/19. Date Finished: 8/5/19. Enjoy! A/N: This chapter will partly be from the unknown woman's POV.

She could hear things at first. No. Maybe they were voices. Two men. She didn't hear anyone else. The air here, wherever here was, had a damp feel to it. It also smelled like old wood. She couldn't open her eyes. Why couldn't she open her eyes? The voices were very far away. But one seemed closer than the other. "Miss can you hear me? My name is Doctor Sam Owens. I need you to try and swallow for me."

She panicked. Why was she choking on something? She was becoming frustrated. *Where the hell was she!?*

Hopper was pacing the full length of the living room and into the kitchen part ways. "Why is she choking doc? Is she awake?"

Sam shook his head no. "It's just a reflex Jim. She's still asleep. She's not responding. Whatever happened before you found her lying on the side of the road I think it may be affecting her brain. But more tests are needed to determine that. Which of course, we don't exactly have access to right at the moment."

Hopper continued pacing the room and gave a sigh, loudly. "You keep saying she's asleep, so does that mean she's in a coma?"

Sam sat back against the couch and nodded, reorganizing his supplies. "Yes."

The lights in the cabin quit flickering as soon as they began. This made the two men look up at the ceiling again. "So we just have to

wait for her to wake up. Great. How much stuff do you have with you doc?"

Owens began to count his supplies carefully. "About three months worth. I'm hoping she'll be awake before then. As soon as the lights stopped flickering, she stopped choking. She could be trying to wake herself up. Just a crazy idea chief-o. Ignore me."

Hopper shook his head no. "But its not a crazy idea doc. This woman obviously has powers, we just don't know what they are."

Furrowing his eyebrows, Hopper looked around the room when he heard a voice. *Uncle Jim?* Turning his attention to Owens he asked a question. "Did you hear that doc?"

Sam looked concerned. "Hear what Jim? You ok? You haven't slept in almost two days. The mind starts playing tricks at that point. You should get some rest."

Hopper shook his head no. "I'm fine doc."

Owens frowned and kept looking at Hopper. "You don't look *fine* to me Jim. Get some rest. At least for a couple of hours. I'll make sure El eats some *real* food if she gets hungry."

Finally, the police chief surrendered and nodded. "Ok doc, but make sure El eats her peas. She doesn't like them. Most of the time she just pushes them around her plate."

Sam nodded and turned his attention back to the woman in the bed. "I wish you could tell us *who* you are."

Hopper had tossed and turned in bed, but he got maybe one hour of sleep tops. The voice he'd heard was bugging him. Getting out of bed, he quickly began digging under it for a box. He found one labeled '1972' on it and opened it. Sifting through the various photos, he finally landed on one that made him swallow hard. Picking up the photo, he clutched it as he pulled back the curtain over his doorway. He directed his question to Sam who'd fallen asleep in the chair next to the bed. "Doc, what color are those woman's eyes?"

This seemed to startle the older doctor awake. "I thought I told you to get some sleep Jim. Why is the color of her eyes important?"

Hopper looked back at Owens with confidence, but his gut clenched. "Just humor me doc."

Wiping the sleep from his eyes, Sam reached for the penlight in his lab coat pocket. "She has hazel eyes Jim. Why is this important?"

Hopper let his gaze go from Sam and the woman in the bed down to the photo in his hands. It was a photo of him and a little girl with light brown hair and hazel eyes. She was atop his shoulders and she was laughing. Flipping the photo over, he showed it to Owens. "Uncle Jim and Jessica. Central Park. July 1st, 1972."

Realization dawned on Sam's face. But Hopper pulled out a worn newspaper article from his pocket with Jessica's photo on it. "I've carried this everywhere with me for the past 13 years. She disappeared from PS 168 on October 22nd. She was supposed to meet my sister at a coffee shop two blocks away. They were supposed to go shopping."

Owens sat back in the chair next to the bed. "So you think this woman could be your niece?"

Hopper felt his blood run cold. "If it is her, the lab is going to have hell to pay. They were supposed to keep their shit out of my town. But now they screw with *my* family? They don't know what kind of hell I'm going to unleash on them."

Sam watched as Hopper began to pace the living room, and into the kitchen. "Jim, calm down. You don't know if this is your niece. The only way to figure that out is to take blood samples from the both of you. Luckily for you, I've got an electron microscope in my bag of supplies."

Hopper gaped at Owens. "What else did you take from the hospital doc?"

Sam didn't seem too proud of what he'd done, but he was doing it for good. Not bad. "I've got enough money to pay for that. Believe me. I

may not be getting \$500,000 a month anymore, but I've got enough saved up to pay for this \$15,000 microscope."

It still didn't change the fact that Owens knew he stole. Hopper looked towards the woman in the bed again when he heard his name being called. *Uncle Jim*? It had to be coming from her. Sam quickly vacated the chair next to the bed, letting Hopper take a seat. "Jessie? Is that you?"

Hopper kept staring at the woman in the bed. He grabbed for her limp hand and held it. "Jessie, it's Uncle Jim. Can you hear me?" The disembodied voice seemed to answer back. *Yes! It's me Uncle Jim!* This made the police chief crumble. Owens put a hand on Hopper's shoulder. "Let's figure this out Jim. Let me take a blood sample from you. Please?"

Rolling up his sleeve on his right arm, he held it out. "Go ahead doc. I want this mystery solved."

Keeping his eyes glued to the woman in the bed, Hopper winced as Sam took the blood sample from him. "You need to drink more water chief-o. I got a flash, but your vein isn't giving me much to work with."

Hopper gave a flustered sigh and looked at his arm. "Use the vein in my right hand."

Putting a cotton ball over where he'd pulled the needle out, Owens attempted to get blood from Hopper's hand. "Hold that cotton ball there for 15 minutes."

Wincing, Hopper looked at the needle in his hand. Sam gave his apologizes to the police chief. "Sorry Jim. Hands are much more sensitive than the arms. You've got a good vein by your pinky finger. Blood flow is pretty good too. There. Sorry to poke you twice chief-o. I put some tape over the cotton ball to keep it in place."

Hopper didn't have a very good comeback. "You could've been a little gentler."

Owens again apologized. "Sorry Jim. It's also more uncomfortable

taking blood when your a bit dehydrated too. Hurts less when you've had plenty to drink."

The police chief became irritated. "So how long is this going to take doc?"

Sam looked at the tube of blood in his hand. "Once I get one from *her* I can start testing it. Shouldn't be more than a couple of hours."

Hopper threw his hands up annoyance. "I *need* to know if this is my niece or not doc. You don't know how long I've been coordinating with different police departments up and down the Eastern seaboard. I don't want her to become a cold case if this isn't her. At first I'd have awful nightmares about the NYPD finding her in the East river or in a back alley somewhere. This woman has *got* to be *her*. I've got a gut feeling."

Sam could see the distress written on the police chief's face. All he could offer in return was his word. "I'll do my best to get the results back sooner Jim."

Hopper looked away as Owens took a sample of blood from the woman in the bed. "It's gotta be *you* Jessie. Uncle Jim is right here. I'm not leaving alright?"

Sam ran a hand through his hair after he wrote down the results from the slide under the microscope. Hopper stared at him. "So doc? What's the verdict?"

With tired eyes, Owens looked back at Hopper. "You should really sit down for this Jim."

At that insistence, Hopper took a seat on the couch next to the aging doctor. "Ok, I'm sitting doc. Is this woman my niece?"

Swallowing, Owens read the paper aloud for Hopper. "The results came back. With your blood sample and this woman's, its a match. So yes. This is your niece."

Now it was Hopper's turn to swallow hard. "All these years of searching, and I just happen to find her on the side of the road on my

way out of town? What are the odds?"

Sam shrugged his shoulders and looked at the woman in the bed once more. "Jessica is going to need a lot of care until she wakes up. Even then, it'll be awhile before she's able to care for herself. Depending how long this coma lasts."

Leaning back against the back of the couch, Hopper took a moment or two to absorb the information Owens had given him. The police chief saw the doctor's eyes wandering back to his bag. Raising his eyebrows, Hopper voiced what he was thinking. "I see you keep looking in your bag doc? What is it?"

Swallowing and nodding, Sam reached into his bag and pulled out a huge brick mobile phone, switching it on. "If the government knew I still had *this*, I would be locked up forever. I kept this. Thought it would come in handy. The line is secure."

Taking the valuable phone in his hand, he could only stare at it. But he knew he had to call his sister in New York. Dialing his sister's number, he put the phone up to his ear. Clearing his throat, he answered when a woman picked up on the other end. "Amelia? Yeah its Jim. Are you sitting down? I found Jessie. Don't cry. She's alive. She's in a coma, but she's alive. What happened? I don't know. I got a call while I was at work saying that the paramedics had brought in a comatose woman. She had no id on her. But I knew it was Jess."

Hopper paused for a minute or two to let his sister digest the information he'd just given her. A couple of minutes went by before he spoke again. "Are you still there Amelia? Ok. I'm checking on her every day. Yes. No. I'm afraid you can't come down here. At least not right now. What's going on? That's kind of hard to explain. But its safer if you stay in New York. Just for now."

Hopper held the phone away from his ear when he began to get an earful from his sister. Shaking his head, he knew he wasn't going to get anywhere fast with his sister right now. "Amelia. Amelia listen to me. Trust me. Jessie is safe. I won't let anything happen to her. I promise."

The line cut out and Hopper was left with the phone's disconnected

tone. Hanging up, he handed the phone back to Owens.

"That didn't go the way you planned did it?"

Hopper shook his head no. "Nope. My sister is very stubborn though, and has a temper."

Sam gave a smirk and a slight chuckle. "Sounds like someone else I know."

The two men looked up when the door to El's room opened up. Hopper went towards El as she came out. "Your supposed to be resting kid. If you want something to eat I could get it for you."

Hopper saw that there was blood starting to trickle down El's nose and a sudden gasp from the bed behind him startled him. Turning, he saw Jessica staring back at him with scared eyes. "Uncle Jim?"

Sam was the first to speak as he looked at El. "Did she just wake Jessica up?"

Hopper nodded, a bit unsure at first. "Well that's new."

El seemed to sway on her feet a little, but Hopper was there to steady her. "I got ya kiddo. I got ya."

To Be Continued...

4. Reunions-Trouble

Chapter 4: Reunions/Trouble

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/5/19. Date Finished: 8/6/19. Hope you will all enjoy!

April 22nd, 1985

Hawkins, Indiana

Hopper's cabin in the woods

Jessica coughed a bit before she could say her uncle's name. Owens was the first to come to her side. "Jessica, my name is Doctor Sam Owens. I've been taking care of you for the last month. Do you know what today's date is?"

Trying to shake her head no, she kept coughing. Then Hopper came into her line of vision. "Easy Jessie. You've been through a lot in the last month."

Eyes widening, she looked around her. *What was she doing in her uncle's cabin? Where was her cousin Sarah?* Sam came into her line of vision again. "Do you want some water Jessica?"

Blinking to answer, she let her gaze follow Hopper to the kitchen sink. He came back with a glass of water. She tried reaching for it, but Owens shook his head. "That's what the tube in your nose is for."

Jessica had to almost cross her eyes to see the tube sticking out of her left nostril. So that's what she felt in her throat. She looked to her uncle with a worried expression. Hopper stepped in and sat in the chair next to the bed. "It's ok Jess. The doc is going to give you some water. Try to swallow ok?"

Nodding her head was proving difficult. She felt like a rag doll as

Hopper helped her sit up. Swallowing the water as it came down the tube and into her throat was even harder. Owens kept encouraging her though. "Just keep swallowing Jessica. That's it. Good girl. Better?"

Blinking again, she found herself looking around the room. The police chief looked into her eyes, but directed his comment to Sam. "Doc, what's wrong with her left eye?"

The doctor became concerned and took his penlight out of his pocket. Shining it into Jessica's eyes, he sighed and put it back in his pocket. She's got a blown pupil."

Hopper shook his head and crossed his arms. "I don't know what that means doc."

Stifling a tired yawn, Owens explained himself. "It indicates a stroke. How severe it is, I don't know. She spoke, so the speech centers of her brain are functioning. It could've been a tiny one."

Hopper's eyes grew dark. "A stroke? She's 20 doc! She's too young for one of those!"

Running a hand over his face, Hopper got up from the chair and paced. Owens was trying to defuse the volatility in the room. It hung like smoke in a bar.

"Jim, calm down. She's young. She'll recover. She doesn't show signs of slurred speech. I'd be worried if she was showing significant signs of paralysis in her face and her left or right side of her body. I'm not seeing any of those things."

Even as he said that, the doctor got a pit in his stomach. Hopper was now three inches from Sam's face and he was about to grab him by the collar of his lab coat. "You make sure it stays that way doc, or so help me."

Swallowing hard, Owens nodded and took a breath. "I'll do my best Jim. I suggest you get some sleep. Your running ragged."

But Hopper was stubborn. "Not until I know El and Jessica are ok."

Sam seemed to soften a bit as he looked over at El, who was asleep on the couch. "How is our youngest patient doing?"

Hopper's anger seemed to dissipate as he went over to his daughter. "She looks so pale."

Owens took El's pulse and nodded confidently. "She's got a strong pulse. I'm guessing that using her powers to wake Jessica just drained her of energy. She needs rest."

The doctor noticed there was blood staining part of El's white shirt. Shaking his head, he lifted the bottom slightly, only to see the gauze covering it was soaked in blood. Lifting it, he saw she'd torn three of her stitches. Wincing, he looked back towards Hopper. "She's going to need some stitches. She tore three of them. I'll give her some local so she won't feel anything. I don't want her to wake up and tear more stitches."

Hopper grabbed for El's hand and squeezed it. He wasn't leaving her side. "I'm right here El. I'm not leaving."

As Sam finished with the last stitch and put a fresh dressing on it, both men heard the door to the cabin slam open with a thudding crack. Hopper's blood ran cold as men in black suits came rushing into the cabin. Heading the back of the group was the one man he didn't want to see again. Quiet anger started to bubble up his throat as he nearly spat out the man's name.

"Brenner."

Sam stood his ground while trying to protect Jessica from the men, and Hopper nearly shielded El from them. There was suddenly something stinging in the back of his neck and then darkness became his best friend.

To Be Continued...

5. Bound by unforeseen circumstances

Chapter 5: Bound by unforeseeable circumstances

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Thing's characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/6/19. Date Finished: 8/6/19. Enjoy!

April 23rd, 1985

Hawkins National Lab

Hawkins, Indiana

Hopper found himself feeling groggy as he opened his eyes. He was being dragged down a hallway. Even though his vision was blurry as hell, he could see the starch-white walls. Everything about this place was more sterile looking than a hospital. If one could call it that. He'd never seen this part of the lab before. Soon he found himself being shoved into a room that resembled more of a jail cell than a regular room. He tried speaking.

"Wai..."

Someone else was suddenly shoved in behind him, and he was sure that someone's head had connected with his back. The door was metal and it clanged shut with a scraping sound. There was at least light in here. Even though it hurt his eyes. Trying to adjust to the wearing-off sedative in his system, Hopper turned his attention to the figure behind him. Recognizing the familiar white lab coat and the graying dark hair of Owens, he turned him over so the doctor was lying flat on his back.

"Doc? Can you hear me?"

He got no response at first. So he checked his pulse. It was strong. Sam was out cold. Hopper had no choice but to wait for him to wake up. Trying to wipe the fuzz from his brain, he tried to pinpoint where

they were. It was a couple of hours before Hopper began to hear the aging doctor next to him stir and begin to cough.

"Welcome back to the land of the living doc. You had me worried there a couple of times."

Sitting up, Owens looked confused at first, not sure where they were. Coughing a little more, he cleared his throat. His voice hoarse as he spoke. "Where?"

Though his throat was dry, Hopper tried to fill in the gaps for the doctor. "The lab."

Hopper didn't have to say anymore for Sam to understand where they were. "I swore I would never come back here."

Trying to pull the door open, Hopper grunted. "What is this? Fort Knox?"

Owens piped up from his spot on the floor, hand up against his left eye socket. "No way out of here that way chief-o. Not unless you and I try to bum-rush the guards standing outside. We don't stand a chance. They'd shoot us before we even stepped one foot outside this cell."

Seeing a little more clearly, Sam got to his feet with the help of Hopper. As he steadied himself, the door flung open and in came two MP officers, ready to escort him out. Brenner trailed behind them.

"So, your the one who replaced me. Interesting choice. The CIA isn't in the habit of recruiting too many OB-GYN's."

Hopper stared hard at Owens. "You told me you were a Neurologist."

Owens clarified. "I double boarded. Unless there are any pregnant women or someone with a neurological mystery to solve, I'm afraid your out of luck, because I won't help you."

This last bit was aimed at Brenner and the two unnamed MP officers. Brenner acted as if he were about to strike out at Sam, but thought the better of it. "I'm not in the habit of striking those who are valuable to our cause. You Chief Hopper on the other hand, are

completely disposable."

Hopper did his best to get between the MP officers and Owens, but he found himself getting a kick to the gut. Landing with a thud on the ground, Hopper did his best to get to his feet again. "You think I'm just going to let you take him? Think again."

Brenner smirked at Hopper. "You think your so brave don't you *chief*? Well lets see how brave you are when you see what we have in store for Eleven."

Hopper tried to rush for the door but was pushed back, the door closing in his face. He looked up at the blinking red light in the corner on of the ceiling. "Son of a bitch! I'm coming for you Brenner!"

Owens found himself walking down a hallway. He wasn't happy doing Brenner's bidding. He stood in front of a door to another room that reminded him of a prison cell. Reaching for the doors handle, he opened it. Inside he expected to find either a comatose patient or a pregnant woman. But when he entered the room, he found it was neither. Instead he found himself staring back into the eyes of his middle daughter Gracie. The tiny girl with dark brown hair and green eyes stared back at her father. Sam opened his mouth and then pulled his daughter into a hug. "What are you doing here baby?"

Gracie looked up at her father. "Daddy! I wanna go home."

Owens pushed back the sleeve on her shirt. On her right wrist were the numbers 028. He became angry. Scooping his daughter up in his arms, he walked back towards the door. The two MP officers parted so he could pass. But as they walked back towards Brenner in another room, he spoke to the officer to his right. "Was this *your* idea?"

The officer shook his head no. "Its Jenkins sir, and no. It wasn't my idea. I'm just following Doctor Brenner's specific instructions to bring him the girl."

Owens tried to console the crying little girl in his arms. "It's ok baby. Daddy won't let anyone get to you ok? You hold on tight. Just hold onto daddy real tight."

Brenner put on a fake smile as Sam entered the room with his daughter who was still crying. "Ah, Doctor Owens. I see you've found our little surprise for you."

Anger was dripping from Sam's mouth. "You call bringing *my* daughter here a surprise? You have no right! Let us go! Let Jane, Hopper and Jessica go too. You have no use for them. All you want Jessica and Jane for is to re-open the gate to the upside down. Assuming you need *my* daughter for that too. What is the point?"

Brenner's smile curled into a malevolent one. "The point is to show the world how powerful we really are."

The aging doctor kept Gracie away from Brenner. Gracie all the while had gone quiet, and completely slack in his arms. Brenner pointed his index finger at Gracie as if to emphasize something. "We've hit a few road blocks along the way with Gracie. She's only able to peel away a couple of layers of the closed gate at a time. The result leaves her completely drained, and for a few days she's temporarily paralyzed. We're working on getting her powers stronger. That's not the only thing she can do. You see, your oldest daughter Angela, she was too old, and well your youngest, Gabi, she's just too young. Gracie on the other hand is just the right age."

Brenner motioned at a coffee mug sitting on a table mere feet from them. It suddenly vanished. Owen's eyes grew big as dinner plates. "She can make things disappear?"

Nodding, Brenner looked proud, but more of himself than the little girl in Sam's arms. He was now cradling the small girl and saw her look into his eyes, her own halfway open. "Daddy..."

Owen's tried to resist as Brenner took Gracie from his arms. Gracie tried to protest. "Daddy... Help!"

Brenner looked indifferent to Sam's body language and instead gave orders to Jenkins. "Take her to her room. Turn her lights off so she can sleep."

Owen's saw the look on his daughters face. He heard her start to cry again. "No...! I don't wanna go in the dark! Daddy!"

Beginning to protest, Sam kept his tears in check. "Don't worry baby girl, daddy will get you out of here! I promise."

Owens spat in Brenner's general direction. "She's a baby. Please. Let her go!"

He was then dragged back towards the room he and Hopper shared. The MP's opened up the door and threw him in, this time he almost landed on Hopper. Hopper responded. "You ok doc?"

Picking himself up, Owens nodded, trying to hide the sad look on his face. "I'm fine Jim. But Brenner has my daughter Gracie."

Hopper nodded and gave Sam a brave look. "Don't worry doc, we'll find a way to get out of here, with *all* of our children. Together."

Sam responded. "I hope you have a good idea chief-o. The doors are locked electronically. So if the power goes out we're screwed. Remember Bob? Neither of us knows how to reset everything and reboot the computers. It's not like we have him anymore to back us up."

Frowning, Hopper nodded. "Well, I'll think of something doc."

If Hopper was completely honest with himself, they were *really* screwed.

To Be Continued...

6. Trying to Escape

Chapter 6: Trying to Escape

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/6/19. Date Finished: 8/9/19. Hope you will all enjoy!

May 8th, 1985

Hawkins National Lab

Hawkins, Indiana

Loud sirens were blaring up and down the hallway, and Gracie Owens was going down the hallway looking in each room. Trying her hardest to find her daddy. She'd tried six doors already. She was now on her seventh. Tugging the heavy door, she found it opened. Inside, she found whom she was looking for.

"Daddy!"

Sam scooped up the tiny girl in his arms and kissed her hair. "Baby, are you ok?"

Gracie shook her head no and looked at the floor. Owens looked his daughter in the eye. "Are you ok? Did they hurt you?"

Avoiding eye contact with her father, Gracie spoke so softly, Sam had a hard time hearing her. "They made me stay in the dark daddy. I don't like it in there. I don't like the pool either."

Furrowing his eyebrows, Owens kissed Gracie's hair again. "What kind of pool was it princess?"

She buried her head in Sam's chest and shook her head at first. "It was really big, and I could float. They put a big bowl on my head."

Owens cradled Gracie so that she could look at him. "The big bowl on your head was so you could breathe under water. I won't let them take you from me again. Ok? Daddy won't let them."

Gracie gave her dad a brave look. "Daddy, I can get us out."

Shaking his head no, Sam looked at Gracie. "No sweetheart. It's too dangerous. Daddy will figure it out."

But Gracie was adamant. "No daddy, *I* can do it."

Hopper all the while was watching the interaction between father and daughter quietly. He piped up. "Well whatever we do, we'd better do it quickly. They know something's wrong."

Setting Gracie down, Owens could see she was concentrating. The chair in the corner suddenly disappeared. But this in turn drained her. Sam caught her before she could fall to the ground. "Daddy's got you princess. Daddy's got you."

An MP appeared in the door suddenly, and called back to Brenner. "I found her sir! She's with her father!"

Owens saw Gracie's tiny body begin to shake, and his blood ran cold. Setting her down on the floor, he turned to Hopper. "Jim, help me hold her down."

Hopper did as he was told. Brenner showed up inside the room, looking at the helpless little girl. "Fourth seizure today. I'd give her something to stop it, but she's completely maxed-out on Phenobarbital. We'll have to wait it out."

Brenner said the last part as if it were just an inconvenience to him. Rather than life threatening. Sam watched as his daughter stilled. Reaching towards her neck to take her pulse, he grew angry at Brenner. "Her pulse is racing! At this rate she could have a stroke! But you don't care do you? All you care about is opening the Upside down. Did you even take the Hippocratic Oath? The first rule of being a doctor is *do no harm*. You *are* doing harm. This is *my* baby. Let her go. She's of no use to you."

Brenner's smirk became wider. "I was crossing my fingers, just so you

know. Your daughter is showing some amazing gifts. I'm merely encouraging her to use them."

Sam was tired of stewing in silent anger. But it was Hopper who took the first step. Striding up to Brenner, he clocked him one straight in the nose. Brenner, taking a left hand to his nose, quickly pulled it away, only to reveal that Hopper had broken it.

"*That*, is for hurting my family, his family and all the other countless children whose lives you ruined and stole. The both of us will burn this place to the ground if we have to. You have my word."

The smirk never leaving his face, Brenner motioned for someone to come into the room. Hopper nearly broke when he saw El, whose eyes had tears in them.

"Well lets see how you deal with this."

El let a tear fall and apologized to Hopper as she began to concentrate. "I'm sorry."

Hopper became confused as things started to go blank and his mind seemed to shut off. Surprisingly, he could still hear, but he could do nothing about it. Brenner stepped in and explained. "Eleven is showing some promise with her newest gift. She's able to wipe people's minds. Make them forget things. People, events. A sort of amnesia if you will."

Feeling himself fall on the floor, Hopper could hear a similar thud next to him. A door made a scraping sound somewhere near them. It was twenty minutes or so before either man could move or think. It was a slow process, but soon Hopper had his voice back. He spoke to the man that lie on the floor mere feet from him, and there was a little girl sprawled out on her stomach right next to him. "Are you ok?"

Hopper was sure he knew this man's name. The man in the white lab coat sat up, a confused expression on his face. But it changed to concerned when he saw the little girl lying next to him. Reaching over, he took her pulse. "No pulse. She's not breathing."

Hopper was by the other man's side. "Which do you want me to do? Compression's or mouth to mouth?"

The doctor nodded seriously at Hopper. "I'll do the compression's."

Hopper agreed. "You got it doc."

He wasn't sure he understood the reason why he had knots in his stomach. But something about this situation felt familiar. He couldn't put his finger on it though. "...28 29 30. Your turn chief-o! Go!"

The doctor stared at Hopper for a few seconds. As Hopper gave the girl two breaths, and the man next to him started compression's again, he looked more confused. "Why did you just call me chief-o?"

Now the doctor was confused. "I don't know."

They had now done four sets of compression's and breaths and the doctor was getting tired. But he wasn't giving up on the little girl.

"Come on sweetheart. Come back."

He felt tears coming to his eyes, and the more he looked at this girl, the more his heart broke. Something about her was familiar. Hopper himself was getting tired. Then the girl in front of them took a breath and started coughing. She looked scared. Then she uttered one word that sent him crashing back to reality.

"Daddy?"

A flood of memories washed over the doctor and a small sob escaped his mouth. "Oh my god, Gracie."

Now it was Gracie's turn to cry. "Daddy, I'm sorry. I tried to get us out. It's too hard..."

Sam shook his head. "It's ok baby. You don't have to try and get us out of here. It's only hurting you. I don't want to see you hurt ok? Daddy and the nice policeman will do our best to get you out of here. I promise."

Hopper only swallowed and looked towards the door.

"Maybe I can find something to pry the electrical box open."

Sam watched as Hopper pulled a pocket knife from his pants pocket. His gaze shifted back and forth between Hopper and his daughter. The spark of electricity made him look back at Hopper. "Any luck?"

Hopper shook his head, but kept trying. "No. But I'm not giving up. I'm not giving Brenner that satisfaction of being right about not being able to get out of here alive."

Owens looked back at Gracie who began to wheeze. "You ok sweetheart?"

Gracie responded, but Sam had to strain to hear her. "Daddy... It hurts..."

The aging doctor saw that his daughter's lips were turning blue. Getting to his feet, although they felt like noodles he managed to get to the door. He quickly looked to Hopper. "Put the cover over the electrical box."

Hopper nodded and put the cover back on. Sam began to bang on the door. An MP opened up the door. Owens was in no mood to sit and argue with this MP, so instead he barked orders. "Get me some oxygen. NOW!"

Hopper blinked and looked down at the girl in the doctor's arms. His mind flashed back to Sarah the day in the park. He softened and looked at Gracie. "Hey Gracie, can you look at me? I want you to breathe ok? Watch me. Breathe in and out. In and out. In and out. Good girl."

Sam seemed to dial back his fear disguised as anger when another MP came back with some oxygen. Turning the dial on the canister a couple of times, he carefully placed the oxygen mask over Gracie's face. She looked up at her dad with pleading eyes. Owens pushed some dark hair from the young girl's eyes. Hopper broke the tense silence.

"What happened?"

The aging doctor swallowed and kept a brave face. "Even doing

compression's with one hand can run the risk of breaking a rib. That's what happened here. The thing is, I may have punctured her lung."

Hopper looked straight at Sam and shook his head. "It's not your fault doc. It was an accident."

Getting to his feet, Owens looked at Hopper. "Let's talk to Brenner."

As the police chief and doctor got up to the MP's, they were stopped. "Where do you two think your going?"

Hopper stood his ground. "Take us to Brenner."

The MP on the left grabbed for his walkie on his belt loop. "Yeah Gary, I've got Chief Hopper here and the doc asking if we can take them to see Brenner. You sure? Alright."

The MP to the right now spoke. "Alright. Looks like today is your lucky day."

Hopper let Sam go first. He watched as they went down the hallway as the doctor held his daughter and pulled the hand cart that held the oxygen with him. The MP's led them back to the control room. Brenner was sitting in a chair, observing the ever-widening crack that was the gate. "So glad you could join us doc. I see you've brought my star pupil. She just needs to regroup. But honestly, if she succumbs to death... Well..."

Owens looked down at Gracie who had fallen asleep. He gave her over to Hopper who was very careful. Sam was now in Brenner's face. "Say that to me again!"

By now, the aging doctor had knocked Brenner over. A couple of MP's had pulled him off the white-haired scientist. His face was covered in blood. The MP to the right was about to strike him, but Brenner held up a hand. "He's not to be harmed gentlemen. We need him. Is that clear?"

The MP nodded but frowned. "Yes sir."

Standing up again, Owens shook his right hand. His knuckles were already turning red. He pointed to all the men in the room. "I don't

want any part of *this*. Do you hear me? All *this*? Is way out of my expertise. I won't help you."

Another MP had come into the control room and took Gracie from Hopper's arms. He directed his question towards Brenner. "Shall I take her back to her room sir?"

Brenner nodded. "Yes. Bring Chief Hopper's niece, subject 27 to her room. She can heal fractures and tissue."

Owens pointed a finger at Brenner. "You and me? We aren't done. Do you hear me?"

Brenner only smirked. Hopper only glared at him. "Mark my words Brenner, I will find a way to get these kids out of here. Then I'm going to find a way to stick your ass in jail. In a place where you'll *never* see the light of day again. Got it?"

Giving a humorless cackle, Brenner only stood up and straightened his lab coat, which was now covered in his own blood. "I'd like to see you try chief."

The MP's were now leading the two men out of the control room. As they were going back to their room, Hopper saw a window on the left side of the hallway. Peering inside, he saw El sitting in a corner on the floor, hands covering her ears and crying. Becoming furious, Hopper looked at one of the MP's. "What the hell did you do to her?"

The MP only stared straight ahead. Stoney-faced. "I'm not the one you should be blaming. I'm not responsible for what happens to the subject. I just follow orders."

Hopper's eyes grew dark and he chanced going up to the window. Knocking on it, he got El's attention. Startled at first, she slowly got to her feet. Tears were still staining her cheeks as she got to the window. "Dad?"

An MP got Hopper with the butt of his rifle in the stomach. He could hear El scream. "No!"

Hopper wasn't going to give up. This first escape attempt was a dud, but the next one sure as hell wouldn't be.

To Be Continued...

7. Dire Circumstances

Chapter 7: Dire Circumstances

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/9/19. Date Finished: 8/13/19. A/N: Thanks to Erik'sTrueAngel for the reviews. For those of you lurking, don't be shy. I welcome you.

Hopper was bound to a chair, which was bolted to the floor. El stood in front of him, unsure who she should listen to. Brenner stood behind her, encouraging her to use her powers. But what he was asking of her, wasn't what she wanted.

"I want you injure your father."

El turned to Brenner, shaking her head. "No papa. I won't."

At this insistence, Hopper became vexed. He wasn't going to let this callous son of a bitch get away with this.

"Listen kid, you don't have to do this. I promised I wouldn't let him hurt you anymore. I'm not about to break that promise now. Please."

Brenner intervened and coaxed her once again. "You know what you have to do Eleven. You would make me very proud. Listen to your papa."

Keeping her eyes on Brenner, El tried to use her powers on him. But he was quicker than she was. Before she could incapacitate him, he injected a sedative into the side of her neck. Hopper pulled at the restraints keeping him in the chair.

"Brenner, you son of a bitch. What did you just give her?"

Smirking, Brenner only acted as if nothing bothered him. "A mild sedative. She'll be asleep for the next twelve hours. I think you should get some rest. You look like you could use some."

Pulling at his restraints harder, Hopper spit in Brenner's direction. "If I weren't tied to this chair, I'd kick your sorry ass."

Brenner gave a humorless laugh. "With that attitude, you'll never get Eleven back."

Narrowing and dark eyes peered back at Brenner. "What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

Completely ignoring Hopper's comment, Brenner nodded to the MP officers behind him. "Take him back to his cell and put him with Owens. Where are we with subject 28?"

The MP untying Hopper looked grim. "She died five minutes ago. We're giving the doc time to process."

At this revelation, Hopper grew livid. Lunging at Brenner, Hopper tried to get a good swing at him, but one of the MP's knocked him over. "Stay down!"

Hopper stewed all the way back to his cell. As soon as the MP's threw him in the cell with Owens and Gracie, he could immediately feel the grief in the air. Landing next to Sam, the doctor didn't seem to notice Hopper. Swallowing, Hopper managed to sit up and placed a hand on Sam's shoulder. This caused the aging doctor to lash out. "Leave her alone!?"

Hopper threw his hands up in surrender. "Easy doc, its just me."

At this admission, Owens calmed a bit. "Chief-o. It's you."

The doctor was quiet, but only towards Hopper. He had his attention on Gracie. She looked like she was just sleeping. "It's ok baby. Daddy is going to get you out of here. We're getting out of this place and going back to New York. We'll get back to mommy and your sisters. We'll take a trip to the Statue of Liberty, just like I promised."

Hopper had a lump in his throat as he listened to Owens speak. He'd promised Sarah the same thing. But he'd never gotten around to it. She'd spent her relatively short life in New York and never got to see the Statue of Liberty. Confusion written across his face, Hopper watched Sam. He cleared his throat and spoke. "She's got a weak

pulse... But she's not breathing. She's got a chance. I'm not letting her die in this place. "

Something told Hopper that the aging doctor was right, but he didn't know why. Reaching the hopeful doctor, he lowered his voice. "Same as before?"

Sam nodded. "Yeah."

Glaring at the MP guards standing in the open doorway, Hopper saw the one closest to him have a look of what he thought was worry flit across his face. He took a chance. "This is a three man job, if you wanna help get your ass over here."

The young MP nodded and knelt down on the floor next to Owens. "What do you want me to do?"

The other MP at the door looked angry. "Garson, what are you doing?"

Garson looked up at the other MP. "There's following orders, and then there's letting a child die. I will not let a child die. Would you do that Michaelson?"

Michaelson gave a grunt of displeasure and joined the group desperately trying to save Gracie. It was twenty minutes before the group finally got Gracie breathing again and the two MP's returned to their post at the door. Sam held Gracie in his arms and rocked her a bit. "Good girl Gracie. Don't scare daddy like that."

Brenner appeared in the doorway. Clearly annoyed. Sighing, he gave a pointed stare at the men sitting on the floor. "That child stops breathing more than she uses her gifts. I suppose we could give her a full week of rest. But then she gets back to re-opening the gate. Our timetable is in the tank now."

Brenner signaled at Garson to take Gracie from Sam. The young MP leaned down on one knee and held his arms out for Gracie. Owens agreed, although regrettably so. He lowered his voice so that only the aging doctor could hear. "Don't worry."

This gave Sam hope. Maybe he could trust Garson. But he wasn't

sure. He would have to go on his best guess right now. Which was *no*. Owens kissed Gracie's forehead and smoothed some hair out of her face. "Daddy loves you princess."

Hopper threw invisible daggers at Brenner and asked a bold question. "How many more kids lives have you ruined Brenner? How many more are your little science experiments? Huh?"

Sam was so busy looking at his daughter to see Brenner inject Hopper with something. He was sleight of hand with it though, but it solicited a reaction from Hopper. A look of panic flitted across his face and the confusion. The smirk on Brenner's face looked almost as if it were satisfaction. "You look a little disoriented there chief. Maybe you'd better sit down. I think your encounter with Eleven has left you a little stressed."

Hopper was feeling strange. Lowering himself to the floor, he leaned against the wall and closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them, he found Brenner was gone and the door to their cell was closed and locked. He and Sam's gazes connected he could see he was really concerned. "You alright there chief-o?"

Shaking his head no, he felt a flop sweat begin to form on his left brow. He felt his chest begin to tighten and he couldn't breathe. He could hear Owens speak to him as if he were down a long hallway. "Take it easy there Jim. Let's get this top button on your collar. Is that better? Can you breathe now?"

Another shake of his head, Hopper felt his chest tighten more. "No."

Owens looked worried now. Hopper was still down that long hallway, but he could still hear the aging doctor speaking to him. "Just relax Jim. Your having a heart attack. We need to get you some aspirin."

Watching as Sam got to his feet and start banging on the metal door, Hopper tried to drown out the warped sound it was making against his eardrums. He tried to speak, but nothing was coming out. He could still hear Owens speaking, but it was also warped, much like the door. "You! This man needs an aspirin! NOW! He's having a heart attack!"

Hopper felt horrified. *Was that what he was having? No. It couldn't be.* It must be whatever Brenner had given him. Even with his blurry vision, he could see Owens. His voice was somewhat warped still. "Here Jim. Chew this."

Hopper obliged, but wanted to spit it out. The pill was bitter and he wanted to gag on it. It wasn't long before his vision began to clear, and he was able to breathe somewhat normally. He could now speak. "I don't think this was a heart attack doc. Brenner gave me something awhile ago."

Eyes widening, Sam swallowed. "Are you saying that he tried to poison you Jim?"

Swallowing down his fear and channeling his anger instead, Hopper tried to stand. "That's exactly what I'm trying to say doc. Brenner said I was disposable. He slipped me something that simulated a heart attack I guess. Is there a mark on the back of my neck?"

Furrowing his brows in thought, Owens looked at the area Hopper had indicated Brenner had injected him. "There's a little irritation here Jim, and if you're right about Brenner trying to poison you, then I might've done more damage by giving you that aspirin. What you need is detox. We need to remove said poison from your system. You need to be on a monitored bed chief-o."

Hopper didn't like where all this was going. Brenner was going to pay now.

To Be Continued...

8. Demodog's versus Gracie

Chapter 8: Demo-dog's versus Gracie

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/13/19. Date Finished: 8/13/19. Enjoy!

Hawkins National Lab

Hawkins, Indiana

June 6th, 1985

"Twenty-eight, I want you to defeat those two monsters in the room with you."

Gracie shook her head, brown locks flying every direction. She was too scared. But she knew that if she didn't make these two go away, more would come. Brenner stood behind a two way mirror and watched for Gracie's reaction. She was backing away from what she was seeing, but the men on the other side of the mirror could see nothing. A scientist next to Brenner in a chair, with a cigarette hanging halfway out of his mouth spoke. "Sir our timetable is in the tank. Sargent Alforson insists on knowing when they'll be ready."

Brenner looked thoughtful, but it was there only fleetingly so. "Nearly there. We just have to get twenty eight to follow instructions and use her gifts to open a door down the hallway, containing twenty-seven. If she can do that, and transport twenty-seven to the same room as her, we'll be ready."

The nameless man next Brenner only sighed. "What about subject twenty-nine sir? Should I send in Owens to check on her?"

Brenner narrowed his eyes and gave a sigh of annoyance, yet nodded. "I suppose so. You don't see very many adults, especially with gifts too often. Have the others prepare for subjects 30,31 and 32. They'll

be here soon."

The man in the chair raised an eyebrow. "What should we do with the husband?"

Brenner gave him a sadistic smirk. "I've already taken care of it. Our people are *well-hidden* within high-ranking positions throughout the country. The chief-of-police for the Seattle police department is on the way to meet the husband right now. He'll break the news that they've found his pregnant wife. She took a tumble down three flights of stairs and suffered a broken neck."

The man in the chair lit another cigarette. "I'll inform the others."

Brenner nodded in agreement. "Very good twenty-eight. Just a little longer and you can rest."

Gracie didn't want to do this. All she wanted to do was go back to her daddy.

"Why can't I go back to my daddy? I wanna go home!"

Brenner again tried coaxing her. "Make me proud twenty-eight. You can do this."

On the other side of the mirror, Gracie screamed and the twin demodogs seemed to dissipate, in return, Hopper's niece Jessica appeared in the room next to her.

"How did I get here?"

Staring through the mirror, Brenner clapped his hands in congratulations. "Well done twenty-eight. As a prize you get ice cream."

Gracie accepted, but was frightened. She wanted to be with her family. Then Jessica disappeared just as quickly as she had come.

Sam had reluctantly agreed to help Brenner, but under the guise of letting Gracie go. He'd have to make another deal with Brenner. He couldn't just leave the other's behind. Him and Hopper had become

friends. Besides, he'd saved Jim's life. He wasn't leaving him behind. Sighing deeply, Owens looked over at the three plastic bassinets in front of him. Three little girls lie in each of them, howling at the world and the seemingly cold air despite being wrapped in blankets. Sam was angry. He knew that he had to make sure Brenner *never* left this place. "I will get the three of you and your mother out of here. You don't deserve to live in here for the rest of your lives. That's a promise."

Putting his head in his hands, he let out a frustrated sigh and spoke, but more to himself than the MP's standing guard behind him. "What I wouldn't give for my blue stress ball right now."

Brenner strode into the room and placed a hand on Owen's left shoulder. "Excellent job doc. I knew you could do it. We're making progress with you I see."

Sam sneered at Brenner. "What makes you think this brings me joy? The birth of a child, or children is a miracle and beautiful. But *this*? Your insane idea of using children to defeat monsters from another dimension is totally unwarranted. Children should be allowed to be themselves. Not being exposed to all *this*. We had a deal. But I want to make an amendment. Let Morgan Williamson go, her children too. Then you are going to let me, my daughter, Chief Hopper's daughter Jane and his niece Jessica go. Do we have a deal?"

Brenner made a noise with his throat and looked around the room. "I don't think you understand the gravity of the situation here doctor. We are making history. To abandon it now would be completely fruitless."

Owens rolled his eyes at Brenner. "You can get as many egghead scientists as you want Brenner, but I am a *doctor*. I *heal*. I uphold the Hippocratic oath. Something you obviously abandoned a long time ago."

This elicited another strange noise from Brenner's throat. Sam couldn't tell if it was a laugh or a slight chuckle. "Please doctor. I don't *care* about the Hippocratic Oath. Never have. It's just words on a piece of paper. It doesn't prove anything. I'm trying to build an army to keep ahead of the rest of the world. As much as I don't like

you, we do *need* you. So how about we just work together? What do you say?"

Owens shook his head no and went about trying to comfort the three crying babies in the bassinets. "No. Hey. It's ok. Everything's going to be alright."

Brenner gave Sam a look of boredom. "No? Well, your cooperation can easily be reestablished. Mason, contact Chief Roberts of the New York City Police department. Police Station 97."

Sam looked worried. "What are you going to do?"

Putting his hands up, Brenner kept shaking his head. "You see, I'm already two steps ahead of you doctor. We've mailed your wife your daughter's school uniform. As we speak, we are sending out a bounty hunter to dispose of your wife and take your daughter's upstate."

Realization dawned on Owens and he connected the dots. "Montauk? That's been closed for years."

A strange smile spread over Brenner's face. "Is it now?"

Sam put his hands up in surrender. "Ok. I'll do what you ask. Just please don't hurt my family."

Radio now in hand, Brenner spoke to whomever was on the other end. "We are a no-go Mason. Do you copy?"

The man on the other end seemed flustered. *"Of course sir. But we've got other problems down here. It seems Hopper got out of his cell somehow and is wandering around the lab somewhere."*

Brenner gave a disgusted sigh. "He couldn't have gone far Mason! Find him!"

This gave Owens some hope. Maybe they could get out of here.

Even with a slightly battered face Hopper could still hold his own. He swung at the first MP he could get his hands on. "How can you blindly follow orders!? These are helpless children!?"

He didn't know why he lumped his niece into that category, but he did for some reason. Hopper was in the room with Jessica by his side. She knocked six MP's out in one flick of her right hand. "Uncle Jim, you can stop now! Their out!"

Hopper looked up at Jessica and gave a sigh. "Let's go before they come for us."

Jessica stepped over the unconscious bodies, following her uncle down the hallway. The sirens were excruciatingly painful to listen to as they ran down the hallway. Reaching a door, Hopper swiped the card key through the card reader. The lock on the door clicked open. Opening the heavy metal door, he found Gracie inside. She was huddled in a corner. Brenner lying in a heap on the floor. She had her ears covered and she was crying. "I didn't mean to."

Jessica leaned down to Gracie's level. "He's not dead. He's just sleeping. Come with us. We're getting out of here. Where's El?"

Gracie shrugged her shoulders as Jessica scooped her up in her arms. "I don't know."

Hopper was the first to speak. "Where's El? Where's Owens?"

Jessica sighed and kept walking. "I don't know where El is. She's probably in one of these rooms. Doc Owens should be next door. He was helping a pregnant woman out."

Gracie looked up at Jessica. "Sometimes daddy helps babies come into the world. But he mostly just helps people who's brain is hurt."

Nodding, Jessica took the card key from her uncle and ran it through the reader. The lock clicked open and she entered the room where Owens, the triplets and Morgan Williamson were. Sam looked up when he saw the trio, but reached for Gracie. Gracie climbed into her dad's arms and didn't let go. "Daddy!"

A roar from down the hallway got their attention. Gracie held onto her dad tighter. Sam backed up. "I won't let those monsters hurt you princess. Daddy will protect you."

Hopper became as pale as a sheet. "Got any bright ideas Jess?"

His niece concentrated on the demo-dog down the hallway. "I can only distract him for a couple of minutes. He's disoriented right now. I need El's help Uncle Jim. I can't do this alone."

Nodding Hopper turned his attention to the unconscious MP on the ground in front of him. He would need his gun and lots of ammo.

To Be Continued...

9. Loaded up-Not Prepared

Chapter 9: Loaded-up/Not Prepared

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/13/19. Date Finished: 8/17/19. Enjoy!

Hawkins National Lab

Hawkins, Indiana

June 6th, 1985

Gunfire could be heard in almost all directions. The roar of a few more demodogs was now present. Hopper gritted his teeth. *Where the hell was El?* Jessica was at the head of the group trying to disorient the dogs as a distraction. But she was becoming tired. She wiped the blood from her nose and looked to Gracie. "Gracie, I need your help."

Gracie only buried her head in Owens shoulder. "I don't wanna..."

Licking her lips, Jessica put a hand on Gracie's shoulder. "Look, when we leave here, we'll never have to use our powers again. Ok?"

Jessica could see that Gracie was still not convinced. Sam looked into Jessica's eyes. "Let me talk to her."

A loud boom rocked the hallway and the gang was thrown to the ground. The demodogs gave cries of pain and went scattering back towards the gate. MP's were armed to the teeth now running after the demodogs. Gracie whimpered next to Sam. "Daddy..."

Owens looked her over. "Are you ok honey?"

Gracie nodded and tried to get to her feet. One MP looked down at Owens and stopped. "You alright sir?"

For a moment, Sam was taken aback. Then he realized it was Garson. "I'm fine. What was that?"

Garson nodded towards the closing gate. "We've figured out just the right frequency to repel them. The frequency seems to hurt them. It's harmless to humans. But the effect of it throws everyone to the ground. Kind of like a sonic boom I guess."

Sam could sense compassion in this man. Garson wasn't like the others. Lowering his voice, Garson continued his thought. "I can get you out of here. But you've got to trust me. It's going to take time. There are only four of us so far. We don't trust Brenner. He's bordering on megalomania."

Owens almost wanted to snort. "You think just a *little*?"

Garson got to his feet and nodded at him, following the rest of the MP's down the hallway towards the closed gate. A bunch of demodogs were huddled together, in obvious pain. The MP's crowded around them, guns drawn. Hopper grew angry and asked again about El. "Where's El?"

Jessica turned her attention to her uncle. "Uncle Jim, I don't know. We'll find her ok?"

Gunfire sounded again, and the demodogs seemed to drop. As they dropped like flies, Hopper could see someone in the dead center of it all. His heart began to race. Anxiety creeping up on him. What he wouldn't give for his anti-anxiety pills right now. When he saw that it was El, he lunged forward, pushing past several MP's. Taking her head in his hands he spoke. "El, its me kid. It's your dad. Open your eyes for me."

He took in her still form, blood was trickling from both nostrils of her nose, and it was coming out of her ears too. Was she in some way responsible for the demodogs pain? The MP's parted the circle around Hopper and El to let Owens in. Leaning down in front of them, he looked to Hopper.

"Is she breathing chief-o?"

Hopper nodded. "Yes. But its very shallow. What does that mean?"

Owens looked El over, shining a penlight in both of her eyes. Shaking his head, he stuffed the penlight back in his lab coat. "There's blood pooling around her eyes."

Grabbing Sam by the collar of his lab coat, Hopper nearly exploded in anger. "You fix her doc. What do we need to do?"

Looking exhausted, the aging doctor spread his hands and gave him his answer. "I'll need to get a CT scan of her brain. Then she'll need an MRI. There's a bunch of tests I'll have to run Jim. She needs time to heal."

Letting go of Owens, Hopper seemed to calm. He hadn't meant to explode at the doctor, he was only doing his job. But this was his *daughter*. His mind however kept going back to Sarah, and he felt like he was reliving the nightmare all over again. "I'm sorry I got angry with you doc. It's just, I already went through all this *before*. You understand don't you?"

A flash of recognition came over Sam's face. "Wait, six years ago, did you bring your daughter in for treatment at Saint Augustine's?"

Hopper swallowed, hiding his tears. "Yes."

Owens was deep in thought for a moment. "You were the one I came across sitting on the floor in the stairwell between the third and fourth floors."

Lowering his voice so only the two of them could hear, Hopper nodded. "My daughter Sarah was everything to me. I won't lose another kid. Please help El. Please doc."

Sam nodded his head and scooped El into his arms. The MP's once again parted ways so that he could get through. Hopper was right behind him when one soldier stopped him. "Where do you think your going?"

Hopper tried to push past the group of MP's only succeeding in getting a machine gun in his face, forcing him to raise his hands in surrender. "Ok, I'll stay. But this isn't over."

Brenner stumbled up to the circle of MP's and grunted out a response. "Do we have a way to control these creatures yet gentlemen?"

The MP's looked apprehensively at Brenner. "Yes and no sir. There has to be a specific frequency to incapacitate them. According to Doctor Thompson."

Glaring at the MP, Hopper spoke up. "Doctor Eric Thompson. The emergency room doctor that works at Hawkins Memorial?"

The MP nodded at Hopper. "Yes sir. Why is that important to you?"

Hopper threw fifteen invisible daggers at this MP. "Shit. He's been the mole this whole time. I should've never trusted him."

Doctor Thompson appeared and the MP's parted their circle for him to enter. "Chief, you think I didn't know about your niece? I know everything about her. Hawkins Memorial is just my day job. *This* is my real job. Where the real magic happens."

Setting his jaw, Hopper could only glare at Doctor Thompson. "How did I get stuck around a bunch of crooked doctors?"

Doctor Thompson gave a slight humorless chuckle. "The government pays well. You should know that. Your pal Owens is one of those crooked doctors."

Again, Hopper was ready to pummel someone, and it was going to be Doctor Thompson. "He's proven he's not. He's got just as much at stake here as I do. Don't lump him into that category."

Narrowing his eyes, Doctor Thompson just gave an annoyed sigh. "Sounds to me chief like your off your meds. I can easily get you more. You've had a very rough time dealing with losing your only child. Sarah was it? I can make the pain go away."

Hopper shook his head no. He didn't want to go down that rabbit hole again. El was just starting to help him heal. He was done shutting everyone and the world out. "No. I'm done with those pills. I've moved past that."

Smirking, Thompson pulled out a photo from his pocket. Hopper

paled and he felt himself falter. But he was quick to recover. "Have you now?"

Staring at the photo, Hopper was determined not to cry. He couldn't. Not now. The photo was of Sarah in her last days of life. "Where did you get this?"

Thompson frowned and crossed his arms, photo still in his left hand. "We have people everywhere Jim. Can I call you that?"

Disgusted, Hopper again shook his head no. "Absolutely not. I want you to destroy that photo. I *never* want to see it again."

Thompson was now taunting Hopper. "But it's your daughter. Don't you want a photo of her?"

Closing his eyes and taking a breath, Hopper spoke. "Not *that* one. Your cruel. Do you know that?"

Thompson only shrugged his shoulders. "I've been called worse Chief. I'll tell you what, I'm going to give you an injection of your meds right now. Your going to take a little nap. When you wake up, you won't remember a thing. Do we have a deal?"

Hopper shook his head and remained adamant. "No. We do not have a deal. I don't want my meds. I'm done with those."

Thompson was giving Hopper a way out. Hopper knew it was a trick. "I'm sorry you feel that way chief, but I've got no choice."

Hopper felt a stinging sensation in the back of his neck. Darkness met him with open arms.

Owens meanwhile was tending to El. She was severely dehydrated so he had her on some fluids. He seemed to be doing all the work since for some reason there weren't any nurses around. But he didn't mind. He liked getting his hands dirty. Fixing the blankets around El, he turned his attention to the monitors next to the bed. The rise and fall of the green lines indicated to him that El was still stable. "I'm sorry you got roped back into this mess again El. I know this place causes you to have awful nightmares. After all the trauma that happened

here."

Running a hand over his face for a moment, Sam took his penlight from his pocket and shined it into El's eyes. Sighing deeply, he wasn't happy about the way her eyes looked. They still had a bright red tinge to them. He couldn't definitively diagnose anything until her scans came back though. Which wouldn't be for at least another hour. Morgan Williamson and her three daughters were just next door. He should really check on them. Rising to his feet, Owens left the room and went next door. As he entered the room, he saw that Morgan was asleep. Stepping over to the bassinets, he saw all three girls were also sound asleep. Morgan had, had a rough time with the delivery of these three girls. The first two weren't the issue. It was the third girl that Sam had to have extra help getting out. It took him and two of the MP's to get the baby out.

His eyes wandered over to the iv bag on the pole next to the bed. It would need to be changed out for a new one soon. It was almost empty. Going back over to the babies, he looked at the name plates that had their names on them. All three names had been crossed out and the numbers: 30, 31, and 32 were written in its place. The first baby whose name was Megan was now subject 30. The second one was Hannah, Subject 31. The third was Rebeca, subject 32. Setting his jaw, Owens went to a drawer and pulled out another iv bag. Completely ignoring Brenner at first as he entered the room, he went about changing out the bag next to Morgan's bed. As he connected the solution, and was about to open the port, he saw the iv in her hand had completely infiltrated and blood had gotten into the line. Brenner all the while sat silently and watched Sam work. Once a new iv was placed, Owens made sure all his patients were comfortable and then left the room. As he and Brenner made it back to El's room next door, Sam unleashed his quiet anger. "All these children are just numbers to you?"

Shrugging indifferently, Brenner nodded. "The more children we get, the better. They are the key to helping us get what we want ultimately. You are about to join an elite group of scientists Doctor Owens. You could make lots of money. You could move out of that ratty house you call home on Staten Island. Hell, you could even vacation in the Hampton's."

Sam was not amused. "I do *no harm*. Do you understand me? These are innocent and helpless children. I happen to *love* where I live. I worked hard to get where I am."

Brenner smirked at stepped closer, his gaze landed on El, but he had his attention on Owens. "We know everything about you Samuel Robert Owens. You grew up on East 87th street in the Bronx in New York City. As children, your younger sister Erin contracted Polio, and was unable to walk properly afterwards, so you decided that when you grew up you would become a doctor, to prevent that kind of thing from happening. We know that each of your children were born at Saint Augustine's hospital. Angela, Gracie and Gabi. You haven't seen your family in two years, so your youngest has no idea who you even are. It would be such a shame if something were to happen to you."

Owens took that as a threat. "You *can't* kill me. You need me."

Brenner nodded as if it actually made sense. "Very true. That's why we need your cooperation doctor."

Sam's eyes wandered to the curtain drawn on the other side of the room. Crossing over to it, he pulled it back, revealing a bed ridden Hopper. Hopper looked confused and his eyes landed on Owens. "Who are you?"

Owens gave Hopper a concerned look. "You don't remember who I am chief-o?"

Hopper narrowed his eyes. "No doc I don't. Sorry. What am I doing in a hospital? Where's my daughter?"

Sam took his penlight from his pocket and shined it into Hopper's eyes. Shaking his head, he put it back into his pocket. Turning his attention to Brenner, he spoke. "His pupils are fixed and dilated. What did you give him?"

Brenner held up his hands. "I didn't give him anything. You'll have to ask Doctor Thompson about that."

Doctor Thompson strode into the room as if he owned it. He gave a

confident smirk to Sam. "That would be me Sam. I gave him a hallucinatory. Quite powerful actually, since I mixed it with his anti-anxiety meds. Should have an interesting effect on him once he comes down off it."

Owens glared at Doctor Thompson and wanted to spit in his direction. "First off, we aren't on a first name basis, and two, we need to start him on a detox regiment. I just got him out of one. What is wrong with you?"

Still smirking, Doctor Thompson put a hand on Sam's shoulder. "Well then doctor, I'd get to it. He's going to start foaming at the mouth soon."

Pushing past Brenner and Thompson, Owens began to dig in a drawer. Not finding what he was looking for, he started rummaging through all the drawers he could find, until an MP spoke up. "The activated charcoal is in the cupboard above your head sir."

Sam was about to turn and give his thanks to the MP, when suddenly Brenner pulled the gun from the MP's holster and shot him. The MP was now lying in a pool of his own blood. Owens opened the cupboard and set the charcoal on the counter, and then went back for six boxes of gauze. Stunned he looked to Brenner. "What the hell was that for?"

Brenner wiped a smudge of blood from the side of his cheek. "For helping you. He's supposed to follow my orders."

Getting down on the floor next to the MP, Sam noticed it was Garson. Swallowing, he put a large stack of gauze over his abdominal wound. "Don't worry, I can get the bullet out. I just have to find it first."

Pulling on a pair of gloves, Owens grabbed for an instrument and uncovered Garson's wound. "I'm sorry. This is going to hurt."

Brenner still held the gun and was now pointing it at Hopper. Hopper was genuinely frightened. "Whoa. What's going on here? Who are you?"

Owens found the first bullet and dropped it into a plastic petri dish

next to him. The second one he couldn't find. Shaking his head, he looked into Garson's eyes. "I'm sorry, I can't find the other bullet. I won't be able to find it without doing surgery. It might have gone into your femoral vein. The vein in your leg. We don't want it to travel to your heart."

Garson tried to hold back his tears. "Just give me something for the pain doc. Please."

Sam sighed. He could hear gurgling in Garson's throat. He knew he couldn't save him. Too much internal bleeding. Giving Garson a sympathetic gaze, Owens reached for a syringe on a tray next to him. "You sure you want me to do this?"

Garson nodded. "I just want the pain to go away."

But something was stopping Owens. He just couldn't give the man the syringe. He let a few tears of his own come down. "I'm sorry."

As Garson took his last breath, Sam dropped the still-full syringe back onto the tray next to him. Peeling his gloves off, Owens sat back for a moment and took in the scene in front of him. He hadn't so much as seen a gunshot wound in years. Not since his residency. But neither Brenner nor Thompson seemed to care. Thompson was the first to speak. "Clock's ticking doc. If you don't want the police officer to croak from an overdose, you'd better hurry."

Getting too his feet, Sam gave an evil stare to Brenner. "Clean up your mess. Don't half-ass it either. I'll do an autopsy on him later."

The last half of his sentence he'd closed his eyes. He'd gotten himself into this too deep. He should've said no when they approached him two years ago. Money be damned. Going back over towards the counter, he poured the activated charcoal into a large syringe without the needle. Going back over to the bed where Hopper lay, he handed the black substance to him. "Jim, I want you to drink this."

Hopper took the offending substance and pushed it back. "No way doc. This shit stinks."

Sam tried again. "I really need you to drink this Jim. If you don't,

you'll die."

This seemed to get Hopper's attention, so down the hatch it went. Five minutes later he was throwing up over the side of the bed. Putting a hand on Hopper's shoulder, Owens tried his best to comfort him. "There we go. Let it all out. You'll feel better afterwards. I promise."

Hopper looked bleary-eyed at Sam and shook his head. "Are you absolutely sure doc, because right now I feel like shit."

Nodding his head yes, Owens squeezed Hopper's shoulder. "Trust me chief-o, you'll be alive."

To Be Continued...

10. Revealing the thirteen year gap

Chapter 10: Revealing the thirteen year gap

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/18/19. Date Finished: 8/19/19. Enjoy! A/N: This chapter will be presented in flashback form.

New York City

October 22nd, 1972

PS 168

3:05 p.m. EST

Seven year-old Jessica Stevens skipped out the front doors of PS 168 excited to go clothes shopping with her mother Amelia. As she reached the outside gates, a black car pulled up, men in black suits exited and grabbed her. As they stepped into the car, the man holding Jessica placed a cloth over her mouth before she could scream. It was black after that.

When Jessica woke, was in a room with a two way mirror. She was hooked up to some machine and had needles in her arms. She started crying. Then she was in a dark room. When the light came again, she had the number 027 on her right wrist. She yelled. "I wanna see my mommy! I wanna go home! Please!"

Queens, New York

October 23rd, 1972

Hopper Residence

"Jim, you're giving her too much. She's going to spit up on you. Again."

Jim Hopper only gave his wife Diane a smile and kept feeding their three month old daughter Sarah. "Don't worry honey, I came prepared this time. I've got a burp rag right here."

The phone startled Hopper out of his thoughts. Handing Sarah and the burp rag over to Diane, he picked up the receiver on the wall. "Hello? Amelia? Wait. Wait. Slow down. What happened? Did you file a missing persons report? Ok. Good. I can meet you back at the precinct in twenty minutes. Everything's going to be ok."

Hanging the receiver back in its cradle, Hopper turned to his wife. "Lunch break's over sweetheart. I've got to meet Amelia back at the station. Jessica's missing."

Diane gave Hopper a concerned look. "Don't worry Jim. You'll find her. I know you will."

Hopper putting his coat and hat on, he walked out the door to their house. It was cold outside. But it wasn't ready to snow yet. He'd find his niece if it was the last thing he did.

October 30th, 1972

New York City

Police precinct 88

"Amelia, I know your worried. But the best thing for you to do, is to go home and sit by the phone."

Amelia only stood her ground with her brother. "No Jim. I can't just sit by the phone and wait for you to call. Whether its good news and you've found her safe. Or with bad news saying you found her in the East river. Where are you with your investigation? Which neighborhoods are you canvassing?"

Hopper took a breath and let it out slowly. Leading his sister Amelia over to a map of the city, he pointed to all the circled neighborhoods. "Queens and Brooklyn."

But his sister Amelia shook her head. "That's not good enough Jim. We

need to look everywhere."

Rubbing a hand over the back of his neck, Hopper gave a sigh of frustration. "You're asking me to look for a needle in a hay stack Amelia. There are almost 8 million people in this city. We're doing our best. I've already taken statements from her teacher, all the staff at the school, hell even the janitor. I really need you to just go home and wait by the phone. Please. We're going to find her ok?"

Relenting, Amelia pulled her brother in for a hug. "Bring my baby home to me Jim. Please."

Hopper immediately felt guilty that he'd gotten angry at his sister. He called her back just as she reached the entrance. "Amelia? Come here."

Amelia almost sprinted towards her brother and wrapped her arms around him. "Find my baby Jim. She's out there all alone. Who could've taken her?"

That was the real question Hopper wanted an answer to. The next place he'd canvas was the Bronx. "We're searching the Bronx next. We've already searched nearly every inch of downtown. You've got to trust me on this Amelia. We'll find her."

October 30th, 1973

Queens, New York

Hopper residence

"Hello? Oh my god. You found her? Yes, I'll be there right away."

Swallowing, Hopper closed his eyes. He felt Diane's hand on his left shoulder. "Jim, what is it?"

Hopper was trying to keep the anxiety out of his voice, but he was faltering. "The guys from the 66th precinct found a girl about Jessica's age matching her description. Amelia and I are going down to the city morgue to identify the body."

Something told Hopper that this girl wasn't Jessica. But she was still

someone's baby. It was thirty minutes before Amelia and Hopper arrived at the city morgue. He let a breath out that he hadn't realized he'd been holding when him and Amelia found out the identity of the child. Turning to Amelia he spoke. "Amelia look. We know its not her. She's still out there somewhere. Alive. I'll find her."

Amelia pushed Hopper away. "You keep saying that Jim, when are you going to wake up and realize that we're not going to find her?"

Hopper pulled his sister in for a hug. "Amelia, I realize how upset you are right now, but Jessie is still out there somewhere. We'll find her ok? I won't stop looking for her until I draw my last breath. Got it?"

Amelia nodded but wasn't totally convinced. "Alright. But you promise me that you'll get more guys on this?"

Hopper nodded. "I'm already coordinating with different police precincts up and down the Eastern seaboard."

To Be Continued...

11. Awful truths

Chapter 11: Awful truths

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/19/19. Date Finished: 8/21/19. Enjoy!

Hawkins National Lab

June 9th, 1985

Hawkins, Indiana

"I don't have to swallow anymore of that black stuff do I doc?"

Hopper gave Owens an apprehensive look. Sam shook his head no. "No. All I need to do is take a blood sample and test it. I believe it'll come back negative."

His eyes wandered to El in the other bed. Climbing to his feet, He slowly made it over to her. "Is she going to be ok?"

Owens sighed and looked down at his feet. Looking back up at Hopper, Sam put a hand on his shoulder. "She needs time to heal Jim. I think you need time to process what's going on. Do you remember anything about who you are?"

Hopper sat down heavily in a chair next to the bed. His gaze landed on El. He then placed a hand on El's and a flood of memories came to him. He took a breath to reign in the tears coming to his eyes. "El honey. Wake up. It's your dad."

Looking away from the pair, Owens took a moment to gather his thoughts. Locking eyes with Hopper, Sam cleared his throat. "Can't exactly do that right now chief-o."

Hopper looked worried, with a hint of anger hidden just beneath the

surface. "Why not doc?"

Sam sighed again and took a seat on a stool. "I had to place her in a medically induced coma. To help her heal Jim. You do understand that right?"

Hopper ran a hand through his hair, giving Owens a hard stare. "Do I? You think your doing this for both of us? I think you did this for yourself."

Sam felt his forehead crease with concern. "Jim that doesn't sound like you. I want you to take a deep breath and calm down. Where is this coming from exactly?"

Hopper getting to his feet began to pace the room. "Don't think I don't know your little deal with Brenner to free you and Gracie doc."

Closing his eyes, Owens approached Hopper's pacing form. "The deal I made with Brenner was we all had to go. Not just me and Gracie. I wouldn't leave you behind chief-o. You have my word."

Hopper sighed and softened. "I'm sorry I bust a gut in anger at you *again* doc. This place is messing with my head."

Wincing, Hopper looked down at his left arm. Sam answered. "Your bleeding there chief-o. Have a seat and I'll have you all patched up in no time."

Relenting, Hopper had a seat on a lone stool farther away from El's bed. He held out his arm so Sam could take a look at it. Placing a piece of gauze on Hopper's arm with rubbing alcohol, Owens saw him wince again. "Sorry chief-o. I know that stings. This is to prevent infection."

Now having cleaned and dressed Hopper's wound, Sam sighed and looked back at the monitors El was attached to. The green lines going up and down, still indicating she was indeed still alive. The door to the room opened and in came a group of MP's, ready to escort Owens and Hopper out of the room. "Get up. Both of you. We're taking the two of you to the basement."

Raising an eyebrow, Sam shook his head confused. "Gentlemen, *this* is

the basement."

The MP in the front shook his head no. "We're taking the two of you to the sub-basement."

Furrowing his eyebrows in thought, Hopper looked at Owens as they were escorted into the hallway. "I thought you knew every square inch of this facility doc."

Rubbing the back of his neck, Sam shook his head. "Apparently not."

Entering a large elevator with the group of MP's, Owens and Hopper stayed quiet. As the doors opened up, it announced their location. "Sub-basement level 2."

The MP in front pushed Hopper out of the elevator, nearly making him fall to the ground. But Sam was quick to steady him before he could fall. "Careful chief-o. I guess they want us to go this way."

The large group reached a large black metal door at the end of the hallway. One of the MP's thrust a respirator into Owen's hands. "This is for the two of you to share."

Hopper got an uneasy feeling in his stomach. "Why?"

The MP pushed him forward again and opened up the door. Hopper and Sam stepped inside and the door closed behind them. The two immediately started coughing. Owens was the first to speak up. "My god, what is that smell?"

Lights came on in the room, and there were rows upon rows of black body bags. Hopper piped up next to him. "My guess would be *these*. What the hell is Brenner doing?"

Hopper took a few breaths from the respirator and then handed it off to Owens. Taking his own few breaths, he took it away to answer. "He's been doing this a long time. There must be hundreds of bodies in here. This room is the size of a very large warehouse. It could take us weeks to figure out who all these people are."

Hopper took the respirator back, and when he took it away, he shook his head. "Let's get out of here doc. This place gives me the creeps."

Nodding, Sam turned on his heel back towards the door. But stopped short when he heard noise behind him. Turning his head to look in the direction of the sound, he found one of the bags was moving. The two men stood frozen for a few seconds, then Owens took a few steps forward towards the moving bag. Hopper tried to hide his look of disgust. But he couldn't hide it very well. "Doc, what are you doing? Whoever that person is, their dead. You can't come back from that."

But Sam was stubborn. There was a person in that bag that was still *alive*. He couldn't just leave them here. It was his duty to preserve life. "We can't just leave them here Jim. Help me get the bag open. Their suffocating in there. Well come on Jim!"

This was the first time Hopper had ever seen Owens raise his voice at him. "Alright doc, I'm coming."

The two men dragged the bag down to the floor. Each taking a zipper at either end, they opened the bag. Inside, they found a little girl about five years-old gasping for breath. Sam gave her the respirator and put a hand under her neck. "Breathe sweetie. Just breathe. I'm a doctor. I'm here to help you."

The girl's eyes widened and she tried scooting away from him. Taking his lab coat off, he wrapped the girl in it. He tried again to reassure her. "Hey, its ok. I'm not going to hurt you. This nice policeman and I are going to get you out of here. Ok?"

Hopper nodded at the girl and rubbed his hands up and down his arms. "We'd better do it quickly, this place is like a meat locker."

Owens scooped the girl up and went towards the door, kicking it with his foot. "Hey, open this door! We've got a child in need of medical attention in here!"

The large black metal door swung open and in came the group of MP's. "Sir."

Sam pushed through the group of MP's and Hopper followed. He started rattling off what he needed to do. To help bring the child in his arms back to perfect health. "We need to get her temp back up. As cold as she is, her organs no doubt are shutting down. I'll have to get

some warm saline and put it into her Perotenum to warm her up quickly. Need to get her blood pressure, her heart rate. All her vitals."

Hopper looked at Owens and ran a hand over his head. "Doc, in English please."

Sam sighed and kept walking, keeping the respirator over the girl's face. "Sorry Jim. Basically she needs to be warmed up and put on monitors."

Hopper nodded his head and matched Owens pace. He stayed quiet as they made their way to another room next to the one El was resting in. He stood out of the way as Owens and a group of doctors tended to the girl. Sam for a moment, turned his attention to Hopper. "I think maybe you should wait with El. I'll come see you when she's stable."

The group of MP's were about to escort Hopper out of the room when suddenly, the lights in the room flickered, and the girl on the stretcher gasped, taking off the oxygen mask from her face. She looked startled. Pulling her knees up to her chest, she peered over them at Owens. "You saved me. What's your name?"

Hopper looked at the little girl and watched as Owens approached her. "I'm Sam. What's your name?"

The girl fidgeted some more and shook her head. "I dunno. But the doctors call me a number. Three-three."

Owens knelt down to the girl's level. "Thirty-three? Do you remember your real name?"

The little girl hid her face again in her knees as another doctor threw a medical file at Sam. "Here's what you need to know about her."

Opening the file after catching it, Owens perused the first page and a half. Sitting down on a stool, he shook his head. Then as if on queue, Brenner appeared in the room. "This is a new low for you Brenner. You take a child who has a medical condition? I want to know why."

Brenner held his head up high. "We wanted to see if she could heal herself. Apparently she can. Run some blood tests on her. You'll see

I'm right."

Sam looked back at the girl who was still hiding behind her knees. "She is a baby. Why would you subject her to something like that?"

As Brenner was about to answer, he crumpled to the floor in obvious pain, a hand to his chest. He was gasping for breath. As much as Owens hated this man, he wasn't in the habit of violating the oath of do no harm. Leaning down on the floor next to him, Sam loosened Brenner's tie and unbuttoned the top two buttons of his shirt. Another doctor off to the side handed him an aspirin and he in turn gave it to Brenner.

"I want you to chew that."

Brenner reluctantly chewed on the aspirin. Owens watched his reaction for a few minutes. "I feel like my heart's in a vice."

Sam nodded and helped him lay on the floor. "Just try and relax." It was another few minutes before he saw Brenner relax. Reaching for Brenner's carotid artery on his neck, Owens took his pulse. He was about to speak, but the girl named 33 answered. "Did I just do that?"

Hopper watched the girl, she was still hiding behind her knees. She was afraid. She wrapped the blanket around her tighter. She was another child that they would have to get out of this god-awful place.

To Be Continued...

12. The Identity of Subject 33

Chapter 12: The identity of Subject 33

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 8/26/19. Date Finished: 9/4/19.

A/N: Sorry for the delay everyone. My network adapter on my computer stopped working. So I've had to find another way to post this. Enjoy!

Hawkins National Lab

June 9th, 1985

Hawkins, Indiana

Owens looked back at the dark haired girl and tried to comfort her. She was still very scared. For some reason, this girl reminded him of Gracie. Sitting on the stool, Sam pointed to her right arm, it was red and looked infected. "Do you remember when you got this Ellie?"

Sam had learned that the girl's name was Eleanor Clark. She was born in The Bronx in New York. She'd been in the foster system most of her short life. The girl tried to touch it with her left hand, but Owens took a gentle hand to hers to stop her. "No. Don't touch that sweetie. We have to take that out."

Face lighting up, the girl named thirty-three spoke. "You mean, I'm better? They don't havta wash my blood through a super big machine anymore?"

Sighing, Owens shook his head but turned his attention to a nurse. "She's got an infected Dialysis shunt. We'll have to put her on some antibiotics for a couple of days to clear her system."

Brenner snickered from the other side of the room. He was lying on

another stretcher far from them. "You'll have to do the surgery doc. We don't have a surgeon who's skilled in placing and removing grafts. She'll go into Sepsis if you don't"

Now Owens understood why Hopper hated the man so much, he was a manipulative son of a bitch. He wanted to punch him, but he held back. *Do no harm Sam.* "Have you even read my specialties?"

Brenner scoffed. "Of course I have doctor. Your Samuel Robert Owens. Graduated first in your class at NYU. You hold a medical license in the State of New York. But that doesn't matter since you work for the government. Your main focus is Neurology. But your speciality is delivering children. You spent a lot of years to double board."

Sam glared at Brenner. "I don't know a thing about Dialysis shunts. I'm not a Nephrologist. The fact that you took a child with stage 5 kidney disease is without a doubt, the most disgusting thing I've seen from you so far."

Brenner smirked. "Here's a large text doctor. Get reading."

Owens let the heavy text hit the floor with a loud thud. The girl now known as Ellie cowered slightly. Picking the text up, Sam began reading. He was already getting a headache. Hopper was still standing in the background. He tried to lighten the mood. "Doc, you want me to knock some sense into Brenner for you? I'll be happy to do it."

This solicited a chuckle from Sam, but he kept his eyes on the book in his lap. "Nothing would please me more chief-o, but right now I'm going to need your help figuring out how to help Ellie."

Sitting heavily next to Owens on another stool, Hopper started reading the next page. It was nearly four hours before the two had to stop. Hopper rubbed his eyes, looking down at the blurry page in front of him. "I think I've had enough of Glomular tubules and nephrons for one day doc. What do you say?"

Sam had fallen asleep. Hopper was about to shake his shoulder to wake him when Brenner did it for him. "Owens! On your feet! Clocks

ticking! Get that child into surgery now! We need her ready for General Martins. He arrives tomorrow. You'll have all the supplies you need in the OR. Let's go!"

Owens straightened himself out and picked himself up off the floor. The overturned stool now upright, Sam went over to Ellie's side. She spoke from behind the blanket. "Are you gonna take this yucky thing outta my arm now?"

Sam squeezed her hand and replied. "Yes, but your going to sleep for awhile."

Ellie looked scared. "How long am I gonna sleep?"

Sam tried again to reassure her. "Just for a little while ok? Everything is going to be just fine."

Owens turned his attention back to Brenner and frowned. "She needs at least two days of antibiotics and I will do the surgery. But you've got to give me time to rest. I can't do the surgery on two hours of sleep. Let's just give this a couple of days. She needs time to let the antibiotics work."

Brenner gave a disgruntled sigh. "I suppose."

Sam glared at Brenner and crossed his arms. "You suppose? What this child needs is a new kidney. She needs to be on the transplant list."

Brenner gave another annoyed sigh. "Who do you suppose is going to pay for her anti-rejection medications after she get's said transplant? That child is an orphan. She's in the foster system. She has no parents to speak of. No living relatives. She has no one."

Owens stared hard at Brenner. "Then I'll take her. I'll take her. She deserves a loving home. She doesn't deserve to be bounced around from home to home. The system is a joke."

Brenner shifted to get comfortable again. "Fine. I'll reschedule General Martin's arrival and tour of the facility. I'll give you your precious time to sort all this out."

Sam nodded in acceptance. He didn't think Brenner deserved any gratitude for allowing this. He was only doing it out of an

inconvenience to his stupid time table. "I'd like to think your doing this, Brenner, because its the right thing to do. Not out of inconvenience."

Brenner kept smirking and pulled out a piece of paper from under a file on a side tray. He held it up to show Hopper, but both men paled instead. Hopper swallowed and tried grabbing for it, but Brenner held the paper away from him. "Ah. Not so fast chief. Let me just read this to both of you. It says here that Eleven was born under the name of Jane. But she has your last name chief. Her mother is Terry Ives, which is a woman who is completely insane if you ask me. The last part of this piece of paper is the most interesting though. Why do I see your name on the bottom of this Owens? You see this signature line right here? The one where it says *Physician present upon delivery*? Why is your name there? My name should be there not yours. *I* was the one who delivered her."

Sam nearly spit in Brenner's direction. "I would rather have *my* name there than yours. You have no business being a doctor. If I were part of the medical board, I'd pull your license so fast you wouldn't even have time to utter the word Malpractice."

Brenner merely shrugged his shoulders. "All in the past doctor. Why didn't you take that lofty position at Pennhurst?"

Owens only narrowed his eyes at Brenner. "That place is a breeding ground for torture. Half the doctors in there are quacks. They don't have a medical license. In any state. Just because the patients there have mental issues doesn't mean they should suffer. We should be caring for these people, not hurting them."

Brenner only rolled his eyes. "Ok, time to get off your soapbox doctor. You've had your say. Let me out of this bed."

Sam shook his head. "No. You've just suffered from a heart attack. You need rest. You are under my care. As much as it pains me. Do no harm."

Sighing deeply, Brenner conceded and leaned back up against the pillows. "As you wish doctor. But know that these soldiers follow my orders. Not yours. You're not in charge here anymore."

Gritting his teeth, Owens shook his head. "If I was in charge, I'd have burned those *things* and vines long ago."

Brenner smirked further. "Heh. Well, look how far that got you last time. All the soldiers under your command were killed in their den. What do you say? Up for another failure doctor?"

Sam was at the end of his rope with Brenner, but he vowed to do no harm, and there was a child in the room. "I did the best with what I had on hand. Don't try to pin failure on me. You were the one who made El open the gate in the first place."

Brenner gave a malevolent smile. "You are not in charge of me doctor. I don't follow your orders. I follow *my own*. Do your best to get rid of me. But know that it won't be easy."

Owens wanted to give Brenner a humorless laugh, but his sole attention had to be on the ailing child in the bed mere feet from him. Softening, he turned to Ellie/thirty-three. "How are you feeling Ellie?"

The girl looked unsure. "Is that my name?"

Sam nodded. "Yes, its your name sweetie. Your mommy gave you that name a long time ago."

Ellie still looked unsure, but her facial expression told how tired she was. "I feel yucky Sam."

Owens nodded and looked at the monitors for a few moments. "I know you do sweetie. It's because of all the bad germs are getting stuck in your body with no way out. What you need is a new kidney."

Ellie furrowed her dark eyebrows. "Kiney?"

Sam gave a soft chuckle. "Kidney."

Picking at the blanket covering her, Ellie seemed nervous. "What's that?"

Taking a seat, Owens did his best to explain it to her. "Its something in your body that helps get rid of the bad stuff. Your kidney's don't work. That's why you feel so icky. This is what your kidney's look

like."

Ellie's eyes went wide as saucers as Sam showed her a scan of her own kidneys. "Why do they look like gwapes?"

Owens looked thoughtful, but even he didn't know everything. "We don't know. This is what healthy kidney's look like."

Ellie stayed quiet for a moment as Sam showed her another scan. "Oh. Is that why I can't go to the bathroom?"

Owens could see Ellie was becoming scared. He tried comforting her. "I know this is scary Ellie. But once we get you a new kidney, you will feel much better ok?"

Nodding, Ellie wrapped her arms around Sam's waist. "Does that mean I don't have to take medicine anymore?"

Sam didn't let Ellie see his face sadden. "You'll still have to take medicine so that your kidney stays healthy. But it will be less than what you take right now. Ok? What I'm going to do for you is give you some medicine to make you feel better. It's going to make the bad germs that are hurting your arm go away. Then we can take that tube out of your arm."

Ellie's eyes lit up again. "Then I get my new kidney?"

Shoulders slightly slumped Owens smile faltered slightly. "We have to find you one first."

Ellie frowned. "How long is that gonna take?"

Sam gave her a semi-confident smile. "Hopefully not too long. You have a special letter for your blood that makes it easier to find one faster."

Glancing down at Ellie's medical chart, he noted that she was a B+. Ellie hugged Owens once again. "Thank-you Sam."

Sitting back on the stool, Sam nodded to a nurse to give Ellie a combination of a sedative and the antibiotics. As he watched Ellie fall into a deep slumber, he let out a breath he hadn't even known he'd

been holding. "Keep her on twenty percent oxygen. Let me know if anything changes."

An MP rushed into the room and whispered into Brenner's ear. His annoyed frown deepened. "Doctor, your needed in subject twenty-nine's room. Apparently, she's bleeding out."

Sam nearly kicked himself. *What could I have missed?* Rushing out of the room, Owens made his way back down the hallway. Nearly skidding to a halt in front of Morgan Williamson's door, he took a breath and opened it slowly. Once inside, monitors were blaring and blood was beginning to pool on the floor. Owens swung into action and rummaged through the top cupboards to find as much gauze and towels as he could get his hands on.

Meanwhile, from the room just next door, Hopper watched the whole scene unfold in front of him. He watched through the window on the door adjoining the two rooms. Shaking his head he spoke, though he knew Sam couldn't hear him. "Good luck doc. You are balancing a very full plate."

Taking a seat next to El's bed, he watched her sleep. "Don't worry kid, we'll get out of here. You have my word."

He watched her evened-out breathing and glanced at the monitors. She looked tiny in the bed. It was too bad she couldn't use her powers in her sleep. She could get them out of there in no time. Hopper placed his larger hand over her smaller one. The sound of a metal tray against the window startled Hopper out of his thoughts and he looked up to see Owens pacing the room in a fit of rare anger. His eyes wandered to the machines that Morgan Williamson was attached to. The green lines weren't moving up and down anymore. They were flat and four letters accompanied the upper right corner of the screen: Asys. Watching Sam take a deep breath, Hopper could see the man was pissed off. But he had to keep going. Turning his attention back to El, he gave her words of encouragement. "You're strong kid. I know you'll make it out of this. They say people in comas can hear when their loved ones speak to them. I was never sure about that. But its different with you kid. *I feel* like you can here me. When Sarah fell into a coma about five days before she passed, I stayed by her side and never left her. But I don't think she heard me. You would've

loved your sister El. You two would've been the same age. Sibling bonds are something that can't be broken. I'm sorry you got dragged back into this mess. Brenner will pay for what he's done to you and all those other girls. I'll figure out a way to put him behind bars. Believe me."

Hopper felt his gut clench when El began to gasp for breath. Knocking the chair over as he stood up, he went over to the door separating him from Morgan's room, nearly ripping it open.

"Doc! I need you in here! Now! Something's wrong with El!"

Sam finished cleaning up his mess and washed his hands, coming through the door where Hopper was. "What's wrong?"

Hopper tried to swallow down the fear he was feeling. "She can't breathe. Please help her doc!"

Owens nodded and took his stethoscope from his pocket. Putting it up to her chest, he listened. Creasing his forehead, Sam took the earpieces out of his ears and placed the stethoscope back into his lab coat pocket. Taking his penlight out of his other pocket, Owens shined it in El's mouth trying to see if there could be any kind of clue there. Nodding, he looked to Hopper. "Yeah. I see the problem here. She's having an allergic reaction."

Hopper on the defense got closer to Sam. "An allergic reaction to what doc?"

Owens looked at the iv lines connected to El and frowned when he saw an iv bag he didn't recognize. "She's got saline running through her to keep her hydrated. This one is for sustenance. But *this* one, I don't know what it is. I'll remove it and take it apart. Her throat is swelling up. She needs a shot of Epinephrine."

Hopper turned his overturned chair and righted it, sitting as he did so. "El honey, its dad. You fight. You hear me? You fight this."

Owens was back as quickly as he'd left and gave El the shot. Hopper felt like he was sitting on pins and needles. He felt like he was barely breathing. He spoke up again, impatiently. "Doc? Why isn't it

working?"

Sam put a hand on Hopper's left shoulder. "Just give her a minute Jim. Her body needs to realize the epi is in her system."

It was another agonizingly long twenty seconds and El let out a breath, almost coughing as she did so. Owens placed the nasal oxygen back in her nose and El seemed to catch her breath. "There we go. Ok Jim. She's stable."

Hopper all but ripped the dark coffee colored substance in the iv bag from Sam. He was about to destroy it when Owens grabbed for it. "Not so fast Jim. I need to know what*this* is."

Frowning, Hopper shook his head. "Alright doc."

The more the two men remained in the lab, the harder it was going to be to get out. Hopper stayed with El. He wasn't going to let anything else happen to her. Not on his watch. As long as the doc had his back. If someone didn't try to kill either of them first. He wanted to find out *who* this General Martins was. Some of the soldiers seemed afraid of him. Which didn't mean anything good.

To Be Continued...

13. Inexplicably Trapped

Chapter 13: Inexplicably Trapped

Author: Zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 9/5/19. Date Finished: 9/7/19. Enjoy!

Hopper was helping Owens organize supplies in a cupboard above their heads when he saw him freeze. Growling could be heard just behind them. Sam shifted his gaze momentarily and put down an instrument on the counter top. "Don't move Jim. If we stay quiet, maybe it'll leave us alone."

Holding back a snort/laugh, Hopper shook his head. "I don't think that matters doc."

Owens shook his own head, trying to keep his voice low. "I kept quiet and it still broke my leg in two places."

Hopper nodded, he thought he saw a slight limp when Owens walked. But he'd completely ignored it. Staying absolutely still, Hopper heard what sounded like sniffing behind him. He averted his eyes towards Sam. "What's it doing?"

Sam shook his head. "I think its smelling us."

Hopper closed his eyes, but his hand was curled around a scalpel, ready to use it against the demodog behind them. "Don't worry I've got a plan."

Owens swallowed hard, but stayed still. "Jim, what are you doing?"

The police chief curled his fingers around the scalpel tighter. "I'm going to kill it."

Sam was about to respond to Hopper when he felt something sticky against his hand. Managing to look down, he found that the demodog

had opened its venus flytrap mouth and had stuck its tongue out. It was touching his hand. The demodog made a snorting noise and stuck its tongue back inside its mouth. Owens looked a bit confused, but relieved at the same time. "I guess I don't taste good."

Hopper on the other hand was ready to strike when the demodog opened its mouth and roared, sinking its teeth into his side. Letting out a scream, the police chief sunk to the ground in pain.

"Ah! Son of a bitch! Get this thing off me!"

Sam did the only thing he could think of. Reaching into a drawer in front of him, he took out a syringe and pulled the plunger back, filling it with a clear substance from a large vial. Plunging the syringe into the demodog's head, it screeched in pain and fell to the floor, letting Hopper go in the process. Rolling up his sleeves, Owens helped Hopper lie on the floor.

"Lie down Jim. Lie down. Let me look at the damage."

Hopper now lying on the floor, took his hand away from his side. Sam noticed that the scalpel he'd been holding in his hand just mere seconds before was now embedded in his side. "Doc what's going on? What's happening?"

Owens did his best to keep Hopper quiet. "I need you to stay quiet Jim. Don't talk. That scalpel is in your side pretty deep. But I'm also worried about how deep that demodog stuck its teeth in you."

The police chief again tried to speak. "I can't..."

Sam furrowed his eyebrows at him. "How's your breathing there chief-o?"

The aging doctor watched Hopper for a minute. He seemed to be struggling to catch his breath. "Ok..."

Hopper reached to try and take the scalpel out of his side. But Sam stopped him. "Ah. Don't do that chief-o. You could bleed out."

But it was Hopper's turn to shake his head no. "I'm already bleeding doc, if you haven't noticed."

Owens surveyed the gash marks just above where the scalpel was. "I can't be sure yet, but one of those demodogs teeth might have punctured your left lung. The scalpel is embedded in your small intestine. It's not shredded, so I can fix it."

But Hopper wasn't listening. "So my small intestine is shredded? Great. So I'm gonna die. Do me a favor Sam, get my daughter and my niece out of here. Please."

There was a fire in Sam's eyes that Hopper had never seen before, just behind his calm exterior. "You are not Garson, Jim. His internal organs were shredded. Those bullets tore through him like a jagged knife."

Hopper groaned as Owens carefully rolled him over on his side. "It could've knicked one of your kidney's too. I need you to stay still Jim."

Sam used his penlight to try and find more damage the demodog could've done to Hopper. Sighing, Owens looked relieved. Hopper was irritated. "So, what's the prognosis doc?"

Owens sighed again and turned Hopper over onto his back. "Easy does it there chief-o. Well, the good news is that the teeth from the demodog missed your kidney by at least a couple of inches. Lucky you."

Hopper still seemed irritated. "Ok. So can you fix me up or what doc?"

Sam nodded his head yes and continued looking at the scalpel in Hopper's side. "Yes I can. If I had to guess though, the scalpel is at least four inches into your side. You'll have to go into surgery for me to remove it."

Hopper gave a slight chuckle. "How is it that you keep saving my life doc? This makes what? The fourth time you'd be saving my life?"

Sam wanted to give a chuckle of his own. "Well, who else is going to save your life? None of the other doctors seem to give a shit about anything other than the Upside down or those demodogs. You are

going to be just fine Jim. I won't let anything happen to you. You have my word."

Hopper tried to sigh, only succeeding in coughing instead. He couldn't even speak. Owens put a hand on his shoulder. "Don't try to speak anymore chief-o. You're in good hands. I promise."

"You want my help saving this man's life Sam? Then keep your head down and do what you were hired to do. Open up the gateway."

Sam glared at Doctor Thompson and checked all the leads on Hopper. A nurse had just put him to sleep. All the monitors indicated that he was still breathing. "This man is dying on this table and your telling me to keep my head down? This is ludicrous. Fine. I'll keep my head down. But you have to help me save his life. His family is in here too. Not just my own."

Neither doctor could see each other's faces, but Thompson nodded. "Alright. Let's start with the scalpel here. You said you thought it was embedded at least four inches into his side. But I'd have to say it's at least six inches. It's going to be tricky getting it out since its embedded so far into his small intestine. We might have to let it go."

Sam did his best to keep himself calm. "I promised I'd save him Eric. Please."

Looking at the damage further, Thompson had a look of pity in his eyes. "Sam, it's partway into his large intestine too."

Owens wasn't going to take that for an answer. "No. That's not an answer Eric. No one can live without a gut. There has to be a way we can work around it. Get it out without causing damage. We can do this. I know we can."

Sam felt like his hands were tied. But he wasn't going to let Hopper die. Not in here. Not now. Thompson seemed to snap Owens out of his reverie. "Sam, this is considerably more difficult than you doing a c-section alright? Freeing a child from its mother is easier than this. This takes planning. Now, we could try placing gauze around the scalpel and then removing it. You said he might have punctured his

left lung correct?"

Nodding, Owens took some gauze from a nurse next to him, placing them inside Hopper's side. Thompson placed more on the other side of it. "On three ok Eric? One, two, three."

Thompson knew the risk he and Sam were taking when they removed the scalpel from its spot in Hopper. "Ok, we're going to need more gauze Cristina. If the bleeding doesn't stop Sam, we'll have to pack off the whole thing."

Sam gave a frustrated sigh. "We don't have time for this. We are *not* packing off this man's entire digestive tract. Do you hear me. We can still save him."

An MP came over the PA system above both doctor's heads. "Sorry for the interruption Doc Thompson, but it seems that General Martins would like to see you immediately."

Closing his eyes for a brief few seconds, he gave a frustrated sigh. "Did you tell General Martins that I was in surgery?"

The MP responded once more. "Yes sir I did. But he insists on seeing you now."

Sam took a brief moment to look up at the ceiling. "Soldier, I am talking to you. General Martins can wait. This man on the table is going to die if we can't stop the bleeding. Do you understand me?"

The MP's voice came over the PA system again. "Yes sir. I understand, but my orders are to escort Doctor Thompson to see General Martins. He's expecting him."

Brenner's voice came over the PA. "No need to fret doctor. You'll have several more hands to help you out. Doctor's Jamison, Alson, Hastens and Micheallson are at your service."

Sam frowned up at the PA. "Any help would be appreciated Brenner. Thank-you."

Owens meanwhile kept working as the four other doctors joined him. He turned to a nurse as she was hanging another bag of blood on the

iv pole next to Hopper. "Thank-you Cristina. Did you make sure that's AB positive?"

Cristina nodded her head. "Yes sir. We've got enough AB positive to last us quite awhile."

The monitors started going off suddenly, and Hopper's body began to jerk back and forth on the table. Doctor Hastens quickly inserted a syringe into the iv in Hopper's hand. His body stilled, but the machines were still beeping. It was Doctor Alson that discovered the problem. "Sir, all six of these bags of blood say B negative."

Sam could see Cristina's eyes go wide with fear. He got angry for a moment. "Cristina, I said AB positive. B negative will kill him!"

He could see Cristina swallow as she ripped her gloves off. "I'm sorry sir. It won't happen again. I'll go get some AB positive. I'll be right back."

Owens sighed, he hadn't meant to snap at Cristina, he was just worried about Jim. He'd already lost almost half his blood volume. He was essentially bleeding out. He wasn't giving up on him though. He'd save him. He had to.

Hopper found his vision was blurry when he opened up his eyes. He could see a figure sitting in a chair next to his bed. Clearing his throat but getting a cough instead, this alerted Owens that Hopper was indeed awake. "Chief-o. You had us really worried there for awhile. You crashed four times on the operating table. I didn't think you were going to make it."

Squinting, Hopper had to wait for a moment until his eyes adjusted to the lamp light on the side table next to his bed. He groaned as he tried to get comfortable. "Hurts."

Owens nodded and put a hand on his shoulder. "I know Jim. Just try and lie still. I can get you another shot of Morphine."

Hopper swallowed. "I feel nauseous too."

Sam went over to a drawer and pulled out a small syringe. "Here.

Reglan and Benadryl should do the trick chief-o."

Pushing Owen's hand away, Hopper explained himself. "I'm allergic to it. I get dizzy and have this weird taste in the back of my throat."

Nodding, Sam went back to the same drawer and put the syringe back, pulling out another one. "Here. This should do the trick. Just relax Jim."

Hopper felt the clear liquid enter his vein and it felt cool. He was so uncomfortable right now. "Thanks doc. It's so hot in here."

Owens nodded. "You're running a low grade fever Jim. You need rest. You've been through a lot in the last 72 hours. It's time to catch your breath and take a little breather. God knows we both need it."

But by now, Hopper wasn't paying any attention to what Owens was saying, his sole attention had landed on El, who was still asleep in the bed only fifty feet from him. "I'm here kid. You stay strong ok? I'm right here. You fight this. I know you can."

This place had done a lot of damage to both men, but they knew they had to get both their families out of this place and burn it to the ground.

To Be Continued...

14. Stress and Coffee

Chapter 14: Stress and coffee

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Things characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 9/8/19. Date Finished: 9/13/19. Enjoy!

Sighing, Sam put down his cup of coffee as he heard one of Morgan Williamson's triplet girl's start crying. It was Rebeca. She had wormed her way out of her receiving blanket and was screaming at the top of her lungs. Picking her up from the bassinet, Owens rocked her for a second. "I know your hungry little one. Let's get you some breakfast."

Balancing Rebeca with one arm, he managed to fill a small bottle with formula. Shaking it with the warm water in it, he saw the powder dissolve. Once it was completely dissolved, Sam gave her the bottle. He watched her eat. "There we go. Take your time. No rush now. That's it."

Walking around the room with her, he gave her a smile. "I remember when my girls were this little. My youngest Gabi, she's just a couple of years older than you and your sisters. She doesn't even know me. But I promise you, that I will get you and your sister's back to your daddy. I'm sorry about your mommy. I did my best to save her. I will not let you girls grow up in this place. Promise."

By now, Owens had burped her and was placing her back inside her bassinet. She was sound asleep. All the girls had been fed, and he would come back to see if they needed to be changed in about an hour. Right now though, he needed to go next door and check on El and Hopper. Going through the door that separated the two rooms with his cup of coffee, Sam went over to El's bed. He set his coffee on a side table. Sitting on a stool, he gave El's sleeping form a smile. "Let's see how your doing this morning El."

Taking a nervous breath, Owens removed his penlight from his

pocket and shined it in both of El's eyes. Shaking his head, the red tinge still hadn't disappeared from her eyes. Furrowing his eyebrows in concern, he stuffed the penlight back in his labcoat and went through her medical file. For someone so young, it was fairly thick. Looking at her latest brain scan, he ran a hand over his face. None of her brain scans were making any sense. Pulling an empty metal tray to him, Sam spread out all of El's brain scans on them. They were all taken in the last month. The one from yesterday and today really concerned him. "This doesn't make any sense."

Shaking his head, he turned when he heard Hopper speak up.

"What doesn't make any sense doc?"

Owens took a deep breath and let it out. "I was just taking a look at El's brain scan's from yesterday and today. The readings are troubling."

Hopper was desperately trying to get out of bed. "What do you mean *troubling* doc?"

Sam didn't want Hopper to hit him, because he knew that's what he would do if he told him. But he was willing to take the risk. "The activity in her brain slowed way down yesterday, and this one from an hour ago shows nothing."

Hopper got a pit in his stomach and tried once again to get out of bed. "What do you mean doc?"

Owens tried to clarify as he went towards Hopper. "I need you to stay in bed Jim. You've got a chest tube in you. This latest brain scan indicates no brain activity. Brain death."

Hopper shook his head no. "No. Do the scan again Sam. Do the scan again. Machine's can be wrong can't they?"

Glancing down at the scan in his hands, Owens frowned. "I can't do another scan until tomorrow. What I'm trying to say Jim, is that the brain scans don't make any sense. If El were brain dead, which I'm doubting at the moment, she wouldn't be breathing without being on a ventilator. It would be keeping her alive. But I don't have her on

any sort of thing. She's breathing on her own chief-o. Her heart is beating and the rest of her organs are functioning. So I'm puzzled why an MRI machine would indicate brain death when she is clearly still breathing on her own and everything is functioning."

Hopper wasn't sure what to say to Owens. Shifting uncomfortably, the police chief put a hand up to his chest. "Why does this chest tube have to hurt so much?"

Sighing, Sam put down the scan on the table next to Hopper's bed. Pulling on a pair of gloves, he pressed down around the tube sticking out of Hopper's chest. "Is it chest pain? Or just the tube?"

Looking confused, Hopper wasn't quite sure. "I dunno. I thought it was the tube, but it could be something else."

Owens sat back on the stool for a minute or two and watched the monitors. "Well the monitors aren't indicating any signs of cardiac arrest. Meaning a heart attack. It could just be slight misplacement of the tube. We had to re-inflate your left lung Jim. It collapsed while we were fixing your intestines. I had insisted I place the tube myself. It could've entered the plural space. The space between your muscle and lung. A chest x-ray could help us shed some light on this."

Hopper weakly threw his hands up in the air. "Oh no doc. No more scans. I think El and I have gone through the gauntlet with those things. No more."

Sam put his own hands up. "Ok Jim. But I've got an idea. But you'll need to stay very still while I fix this."

Reaching over onto a tray a couple of feet behind him, Sam grabbed for a long instrument that resembled barbeque tongs only thinner. Hopper watched as Owens placed the instrument next to the tubing inside his chest partway and suddenly he felt his breath come back into his lung. "Shit doc, what'd you do?"

Owens removed the instrument and placed it on another tray with soiled instruments. "I moved the chest tube back in place. It slid out of your lung. How do you feel now Jim?"

Hopper nodded. "Much better doc. Thank you. You can get another scan of El's brain right? Please tell me she's gonna be ok."

Sam put a hand on Hopper's shoulder. "I've got a gut feeling that the scan will show significant improvement."

The police chief looked over at the beakers on the countertop across from his bed. "Did you find out what that coffee-colored substance was that El had an allergic reaction to?"

Shaking his head, Owens let his eyes wander to the beakers on the counter. "No clue. I can't even identify the elements used in it. I'd suspect the coffee color is carmel food coloring though. Something tells me Brenner is behind this. Could this be what activated El's powers?"

Hopper hadn't thought about that. "It could be. But we just don't know doc. We might have to beat the answers out of Brenner just to get where we're going."

Sam didn't want to fight Brenner, as much as he wanted to. His little outburst with him a few weeks ago when he'd first found out about Gracie was a mistake. He'd never gotten so angry at someone before. He lived by do no harm. He'd spent most of his career upholding that sacred oath and he wasn't about to break it now. Not now. Not ever. Giving a tired sigh, Owens kept his eyes on Hopper. "El is stable Jim. But she's lost almost thirty percent of her muscle tone. She'll have to re-learn how to walk again once she's awake."

Hopper grew angry, but was letting it stew for a bit. He was doing his best to stay calm. "So she's wasting away? Can't you do anything for her doc?"

Owens was about to respond, but the door opened and in came Brenner. He always seemed to come in at all the *wrong* times. "How is Eleven doctor?"

Letting out a sigh, Sam handed Brenner El's latest brain scan. He made that strange sound in his throat when he was dissatisfied. "What a waste. There's nothing more you can do for her doctor. Her brain is essentially mush. She's not coming back."

Hopper exploded in anger from his bed. "Come here you son of a bitch! She isn't gone!"

Sam pointed a finger at Jim and spoke. "Hold up a minute Jim."

Brenner could only stare at Owens. "What's on your mind doctor?"

His nose flaring Sam explained himself. "There can be a slight margin of error with the MRI machine. Sir. There is a .1 percent chance that *this* scan is wrong. There's still hope."

Brenner only frowned, continuing to look over El's scan. "It's over doctor. She's gone. Give Hopper time to grieve and then unplug her."

Hopper exploded once more. "You think Brenner that just because you've shown this one ounce of kindness means I forgive you for all that you've done to her? Think again!"

Brenner quickly exited the room, leaving the two men to stew in anger. Owens wasn't giving up. This place wasn't going to ruin them. Not his family and not Jim's either. "I will get that scan Jim. You have my word. I promise I won't unplug her Jim. She's alive."

Hopper wished he could get out of bed, but knew that he couldn't. "I just hope your right doc. I can't lose her."

Sam had never heard that kind of desperation in Hopper's voice before. "You won't Jim. I promise."

Stress wasn't good for any of them. But he knew if he kept this up he would give himself a real heart attack. "I believe in you doc. If that stuff you pulled apart is the reason why this second scan comes back the same I'm going to kill Brenner with my bare hands."

Owens knew the emotional turmoil that Hopper was in right now, but now he worried about Gracie. What if she was being given that substance too? A pit began to form in his stomach and it wasn't going away. "Get in line chief-o. I would love to do the same. Now you make me wonder if he's been giving that substance to Jessie and Gracie as well. We can't let him keep doing this."

Hopper had a forlorn look on his face. He hadn't stopped watching El since Owens had told him about her brain scan. He was nervous. He wished they'd hurry up with the second scan already. Sam pulled Hopper out of his thoughts. "Results are back Jim. You ready?"

Letting his eyes linger on El for a minute longer, the police chief nodded his head. "Ok doc. What's going on?"

Owens lowered himself onto a stool next to the bed. He now had both scans in his hands. Looking at both, he cleared his throat and sighed. "I am sorry Jim. But there's no change."

Swallowing, Hopper wanted to reach for El's hand. Clearing his own throat his eyes filled with tears. "No. I'm not accepting that doc. Is there anything I can give her?"

Sam furrowed his eyebrows. "Anything you can give her? No. She has all her organs and they are functioning. It's her brain that seems disconnected. Eventually her organs will fail. All of them."

Hopper shook his head. Then a look of realization dawned on his face. "We can get my niece Jessie to help El. She can heal human tissue right? Jessie can heal her. I know she can."

Owens nodded and went back over towards El's bed. "I can move her a little closer to you chief-o. The bed has wheels. There. You can talk to her."

Hopper reached over and grabbed for El's left hand. "Hey kid. It's your dad. I dunno if you can hear me. But if you can I want you to fight. You fight harder. I know your in there. Don't let Brenner get to you honey. I promised I would protect you from him and I'm working on it. You fight against whatever Brenner gave you."

A twitch from El's hand gave Hopper hope. "Doc, she just moved her hand."

Owens leaned over the bed and saw El's hand twitch again. "It's just a reflex Jim. Twitches are normal for someone in her condition."

Hopper wasn't giving up. He was still counting on Jessica to save El. Nodding again, Sam got up and went towards the door. Opening it,

he whispered into one of the MP's ears. "I need you to bring Jim Hopper's niece Jessica down here. Please."

The MP looked slightly annoyed, but grabbed for his radio on his belt. "Hey doc, Owens is asking for Chief Hopper's niece Jessica. I guess he wants her to say goodbye to her cousin."

Owens stood quietly as Brenner answered on the other end. "Alright. Give her twenty minutes. After that tell Owens its time to pull the plug."

The door to the room closed and Sam sat back on the stool in between El and Hopper's bed's. He fixed the blankets over El and his eyes roved over the monitors she was attached to. "I still don't understand any of this. How can she still be breathing if she has no brain function?"

Hopper still had a hold of El's hand and squeezed it, hoping that she would reciprocate. "Obviously it means she's not dead doc. I think you guys have a faulty MRI machine."

It was ten minutes before Jessica was shoved into the room. She saw him in the bed and got tears in her eyes. "Uncle Jim? What happened to you?"

Hopper shook his head and kept his eyes on El. "Don't worry about me baby girl. I need your help. Can you heal El?"

Jessica got concerned. "What happened Uncle Jim?"

The police chief almost couldn't bring himself to explain the situation, but something told him to. "Your cousin El is brain dead. At least according to the scan that Doctor Owens took about half an hour ago."

This made Jessica confused. "I don't understand Uncle Jim. If her brain isn't working, then why is she still breathing? She's not even connected to a machine to help her. She's breathing on her own."

Hopper nodded. "That's my point Jessie. The doc and I think she simply needs someone to kickstart her brain for her. Can you do it?"

Jessica nodded her head and put a right hand up to El's forehead. Closing her eyes, she concentrated. It was about five minutes before El's heart rate stabilized. The trio watched as she groaned and opened her eyes. It took her eyes a moment to adjust to the low light in the room. She zeroed in on Hopper. He gave her a watery smile.

"Welcome back kid. You gave us a scare. I thought you were gone."

Kissing her forehead, Hopper gave her another smile. But he turned his attention back to Jessica. "Jess, can you heal her muscles too?"

Jessica placed a hand on El's arm and concentrated. "I'm sorry Uncle Jim. This is something I can't do."

Hopper gave her a smile. "It's ok Jessie. At least she's alive and awake. Thank-you."

Jessica gave her uncle a smile. "Your welcome Uncle Jim."

The police chief knew that he had to get Brenner at any cost. He was going to pay. This had gone way too far this time.

To Be Continued...

15. Relishing in Temporary Victory

Chapter 15: Relishing in temporary victory

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Thing's characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 9/13/19. Date Finished: 9/26/19. Enjoy!

"Easy El. Just keep swallowing. There you go. Take your time. No rush."

Hopper held El's hand and squeezed it. He heard her gag and he rubbed her back. "It's ok El. Take your time sweetheart."

Sam was there with something for El to vomit in. "I know this is hard El. We'll keep trying ok?"

El was upset with herself. But Hopper spoke for her. "Hey kid. You're doing great. Nobody ever said this would be easy. We'll get through this together ok? Keep your chin up kid."

Owens looked El in the eye. "Everything's going to be ok El. It's going to take time for your throat to start working again. Your muscles are weak. Your gag reflex is really in control of things right now. How you swallow anyways."

El nodded and tried again to keep swallowing. She became frustrated as she gagged again. Hopper kept encouraging her. "It's ok sweetheart. You've got this."

The police chief closed his eyes and his thoughts went back to Sarah. Her last two rounds of chemo had completely drained her. Opening his eyes, he saw the look in El's eyes. She tried to speak. Hopper intervened. "Don't talk right now kid. Just relax. I've got ya."

Sam stayed close with the plastic bin in case El needed to vomit again. "I know that tube in your nose feels strange. It's there so you can eat and drink. Once you can eat and drink without gagging, I'll

take it out. Alright?"

El nodded and sighed. Owens saw her wince and try to move her legs. She opened her mouth to try and speak again, but Sam shook his head. "I know that's uncomfortable. That catheter will have to stay in until you are able to walk and use the bathroom on your own. I'll have a nurse come and change that out for a new one."

Sighing again, El tried pushing herself up from the bed, only succeeding in getting shaking arms that quivered in pain from not being used in nearly three months. Owens put a hand on her shoulder when she tried again. "Let's take this one step at a time El. I know you want to get out of this bed. But we've got to get you healthy again."

El groaned in frustration and kept trying to get up. Hopper put a hand on hers. "El honey, stop. I need you to listen to Doc Owens ok? You're only going to make yourself tired right now. Just rest."

Leaning back against the pillows, she gave a flustered sigh. This resulted in a coughing fit. Hopper rubbed her back. "Relax kiddo. Take a breath. In and out. There you go."

The frustration stayed put on El's face as she gave in, leaning back against the pillows. She wasn't happy with any of this. She stared at a jar of cotton balls on the counter maybe thirty feet from her. Hopper noticed blood trickling down her right nostril. "El, don't use your powers right now. You need to give your brain time to heal. Doc Owens will have to put you back to sleep if you keep trying to use your powers. It's just going to hurt your brain."

El once again gave in, looking down at her hands in her lap. She managed to get a whisper out. "Ok."

Sam shook his head. "Don't try and talk right now El. Just rest. We'll try and get you something to eat again later ok? Rest."

The aging doctor and the police chief knew how frustrated El was. But they had to take it one step at a time with her. Running a hand over his tired face, Sam went about cleaning up the supplies on the tray next to him. He saw Hopper shift uncomfortably on his bed.

"When are you going to take this chest tube out doc?"

Owens gave a small smile. "Stubborn as ever Jim. Just until your lung has healed and you are able to breathe on your own."

This only made Hopper more frustrated. But doctors orders were doctors orders. He had no choice.

It was hard seeing El this way, Hopper couldn't help her. He didn't like feeling helpless. "Alright doc. I'll follow doctor's orders. You know how I am at sitting still though."

Sam gave a slight chuckle. "You are like a caged bear chief-o. You pace until the moment is right. Then you strike."

This gave Hopper something to chuckle about. "Do a lot of hunting doc?"

Owens put his hands up.

"God no. I'm not really the outdoors type. At least not hunting. I always thought that with this job, I could bring a lot of joy. Help people that really needed it. There was a girl about Gracie's age back in New York a few years back. She'd been in a coma for five years. Her family never left her side. I watched her grow from an infant to a little girl. Her mother brought her in, she said she couldn't wake her up. She tried tickling her feet to get her to nurse. Nothing worked. The first couple of years of her relatively short life, she was in an incubator. The last three, she spent in a crib. In the five years she'd been under my care, we'd run hundreds of tests on her. We came up empty handed every time. For a short time, at least four days, she was able to breathe on her own. So, I decided to remove her from the vent. She was fine for four days. Then by the end of the fourth day, her breathing came out in short gasps. It was as if something were suffocating her from the inside out. Her mother pleaded with me to help her. But by then, we had all but run out of options. She was so tiny."

Hopper became irritated. "What's the point of the story doc?"

Owens stared at Hopper. "Well Jim, the point of my story is this: El

didn't end up brain dead like that little girl I took care of for five years. She's awake and she's breathing. Jessica saved her life. I think we deserve to relish in temporary victory don't you think?"

Relenting, Hopper nodded and took hold of El's hand, squeezing it. She'd been half asleep and reciprocated. It was weak, but her grip was there. She closed her eyes again and let sleep envelope her. Hopper himself was getting tired. Soon sleep called to him too.

A short time later, both Hopper and Owens woke to alarms beeping and El lying on the floor. Sam lowered himself down to her level and looked her in the eye. She saw him and began to scream, trying to push herself away. Putting his hands up, Sam tried to calm her. "El, it's alright. No one is going to hurt you."

But El kept screaming. Careful not to tangle himself up in all the wiring and the feeding tube attached to El, Owens scooped her up in his arms and tried to put her back in the bed. She tried to fight against him. But he was doing his best to try and calm her down. "El I need you to calm down ok. Everything is alright. Your safe."

El didn't seem to calm until Hopper spoke up. "El honey. It's dad. I want you to listen to my voice. You are safe. Nothing is going to hurt you. I promise. Just relax."

Sam watched as El seemed a bit calmer, she had stopped screaming at least. But she began to fight him again. "Jim I'm going to have to give her something to calm down."

Hopper pointed towards Owens and shook his head. "Just hold off on the sedative doc. I'll talk to her."

Taking a breath and trying again, Hopper reached for El's hand. "Honey, I need you to listen. I need you to calm down. You are safe. I'm right here. I need you to relax."

El seemed to get the message and Sam watched as she relaxed. She closed her eyes and after a few minutes she was asleep. Hopper watched as Owens let out a breath he'd been holding and place the sedative back on a tray next to him. "What happened Jim? She acted like she couldn't see me."

Hopper clarified. "One of her nightmares doc. The only person who can calm her down if she's having one is *me*. Did she hurt herself? Sometimes she crashes into things when she's thrashing all over the place."

Sam shook his head and looked El over. The monitors kept their rhythmic pace. It's even tones giving false serenity. "Thankfully no. She was very close to pulling out her feeding tube though. At least its not one that's inserted into the stomach. That wouldn't have been good."

Hopper let out his own breath.

"Sometimes I wish I could just take all her nightmares away. I remember the year and half before anyone knew she was with me. She had five to six nightmares every night. She would wake up screaming. So, we'd go out to the couch. We'd sit down and she always ended up falling asleep curled up against my chest. I had no idea that her state of mental health wasn't in good shape then. Her whole life had been spent in here. She hadn't been shown one ounce of love during that whole time. I will not let her go through that here again. I promised I'd protect her."

Sighing and raising his eyebrows, Owens wasn't sure what to say. At first. He knew what Hopper was feeling. He worried about his girls too. But at least Gabi and Angela were with their mother. He had to focus on getting Gracie out of here. On top of trying to take care of everyone else.

"That's the greatest fear of any father Jim. Not being able to protect their daughter's from harm. I worry for my girls every day. Seeing Gracie in here has drastically changed my thinking. Do you remember when you first met me? How arrogant I was? I'm glad that demodog knocked me down a few pegs. I really needed it. It really humbled me. Looking around me, that 500k a month doesn't sound so appetizing anymore after what I've seen here."

Hopper nodded, keeping his hand on El's. He wanted nothing more than for her to be safe. "No little girl, no child, should have to go through what El did. You and I are going to make Brenner pay. Did you check on Gracie? She's ok?"

Rubbing his hands together, Owens shook his head. "I don't know what Brenner has got her doing, but she's weak and she doesn't seem to recognize me. I cannot for the life of me understand how that man thinks. He wants all these children, who have powers to help him gain power and control over the rest of the world. He disrupts and corrupts innocence. These children have no childhood. They know nothing outside these walls. We're getting them out Jim. We have to."

Hopper sat back and stifled a groan. "You've been holding that in for awhile haven't you doc?"

Sam nodded and planted himself on a stool on the other side of El. "Yeah. I'm just tired of these children being mistreated. They need someone to love them. Show them that the world isn't just *this*."

Hopper sighed. He knew the world wasn't perfect, but protecting these children from Brenner was his top priority. "How'd we get stuck in this hell hole doc?"

Looking back at El's chart, Owens shook his head in disappointment. "For me it was the allure of giving my kids the best life possible. Until I found out we were opening up gateways to other dimensions. Letting out animals, *things* that don't belong in our world. But sometimes I find myself forgetting that this world is driven by power and greed. Money. I guess I sold my soul to the devil then. Or maybe we both did. I could use a drink."

Hopper looked at Owens and smirked. "Well that makes two of us I guess."

Sam shook his head. "As much as I'd like one, I've got to keep my head clear. For all these children. Not like there's any here anyways. We've been in here so long that I don't know what day it is or if its morning or night. No windows. Your probably wondering why I haven't lost my mind. I focus on my wife and kids."

The police chief nodded and gestured towards El. "El and Jessica are my reason for staying sane doc. I don't know what I'd do if I lost them. Is it really true what they say? That someone can die of a broken heart?"

Owens looked up from El's chart and responded.

"Broken heart syndrome. Yes. We're still trying to figure out why it happens. When I was doing my residency I spent some time in Geriatrics. Taking care of the elderly. Dementia and Alzheimer's patients. It saddens me that one couple that I was taking care of had been married for almost 65 years. Neither one of them knew their names, but they would remember bits and pieces of their lives together. Both had Alzheimers. The woman's name was Irene and the husband his name was Robert. They could both remember their daughter Charlotte. Who was born in Greenbay, Wisconsin on May 15th, 1915. Four short years after they were married. Its extraordinary the things people remember after a lifetime of marriage."

Hopper ran a hand over El's hair.

"I used to think that about my ex Diane and I. We got married in the Spring of '67. We were young and it was the '60's. We thought we could do anything. I grew up in Queens. She grew up in Brooklyn. I thought I would become a cop. You know, clean up the neighborhood. It wasn't easy climbing the ladder. I was sargeant by the time Sarah passed. The happiest moment of my life was when I found out about her. My ex got sick all over the subway at the 67th street station. She thought she'd been coming down with the flu. But when the doctor told her she was pregnant I was both happy and scared. Here the two of us were bringing a new life into the world. Sarah was perfect. She had ten perfect fingers and toes. 23 inches long, 9 pounds and 8 ounces.

We had two perfect and wonderful years with her. Until one day in Central park. In the Spring of '74 I was chasing Sarah in the grass when she suddenly starting gasping. Having trouble catching her breath. I asked her what was wrong and I told her to breathe. We took her to the doctor expecting her to have Asthma. But instead we were referred to an Oncologist. She had an inoperable brain tumor. For five years Sarah fought with the chemo running through her. The week she fell into a coma was when you found me in the stairwell doc."

Sam stayed quiet at first, no sure what to say. "I'm very sorry about

your daughter Jim. My condolences. But we have to focus on the one that is alive in this bed next to you. El needs you chief-o. If we're going to get out of this hell hole, we have to work together."

Hopper nodded and wiped away the tears from his eyes, taking a big breath in. "Your right doc. I can't go down the rabbit hole again. I can't. I was already there for six years before El pulled me out of it. She brought me back from a bad place, I brought her out of hers. This place will burn. I guarantee it. You and I will burn this place to the ground. None of these kids deserve to be in this place. Especially with a twisted bastard like Brenner. His twisted ideas of power are making me wish we'd never crossed paths."

Hopper watched as Owens vacated his stool next to El's bed. "Where are you going doc?"

Sam swallowed hard and gave a weak smile. "To see my daughter. I'm trying to trigger some of her memories. It's been hard."

Hopper nodded and gave him a confident smile. "Good luck doc."

Owens left Hopper and El in the room and went next door. When he opened it, Gracie was sleeping in the bed. Sam pulled up a chair next to it. Placing a gentle kiss to her forehead, he sat back and watched her sleep. He whispered to her. Hoping that she would recognize his voice in her subconscious.

"Gracie its me. It's daddy. Do you remember who I am? Do you remember when we went to Coney Island and you wanted to go on the roller coaster? You and I went on the roller coaster and you got very scared. But I told you not to worry, that daddy was there and nothing bad was going to happen..."

He looked at all the liquids that were going into Gracie. Most he knew. But the coffee colored one made him angry. Seven iv bags of the substance hung from three iv poles next to the bed. Sam let his hand run along an iv line that went up to Gracie's left side of her neck.

"Baby why are they giving you an arterial line for this stuff? What are they doing to you?"

Owens was about to disconnect Gracie from the seemingly unknown substance when Brenner strode in.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you doctor. If you disconnect her from serum XB698J6 she'll first go into convulsions, have a heart attack, then slip into a coma and die. You want your daughter to live don't you?"

Nose flaring, Sam got up from the chair next to the bed. "Your bluffing. What's in this stuff anyways? What is it?"

Brenner put his index finger to his lips. "Shh. Secret recipe. Not telling."

Owens tilted his head to the left slightly and gave a slight humorless chuckle. "You know, the more I try to figure you out, the more I don't understand you. What's your motive? Besides, I do know that the coffee color is carmel food coloring. I only recognize two of the elements in the chemical composition while looking at it under a microscope. The first one is Osmium. Why would you use the densest element on Earth? The second is calcium carbonate. Why would you use that?"

Brenner pursed his lips and feigned a wounded pride.

"You cut me to the quick doctor. Really you do. But in all seriousness, this serum helps activate your daughter's gifts. When given to her in high dosages, it increases her brain activity by nearly 500%. It's incredible really. The side effects for her are seizures and paralysis. She's completely quad right now. Which makes her useless for at least two weeks. Which puts us behind schedule by four months. General Martins isn't going to be pleased with the results we're getting. Or lack thereof."

Sam closed his eyes and then opened them.

"Don't you see this stuff is killing her?"

Brenner waved a hand at Owens. "These treatments are working doctor. She's shown she can dissolve two of those demo dogs with her mind. She can transport matter from one room to the next. She

transported Chief Hopper's niece Jessica from several doors down to this very room. If her body doesn't acclimate to the high dosages of serum we're giving her, she will succumb to the side effects. I'm sorry doctor."

But Sam didn't buy it.

"You know Brenner, I find you very disingenuous. You strike me as someone who would commit a violent crime and not care that you would spend the rest of your life in jail. You keep taking and taking and taking. But someday, when you least expect it, sir, the floor will come out from under you and swallow you whole."

This warning did nothing for Brenner, other than irritate him.

"Are you done doctor? Your words are rather eloquent, but boring really. You act as if you are speaking in front of a large congregation of doctors who work for a pharmaceutical company. You sound like you are touting the company line. Sell, sell, sell. Profits will go down if you don't get hospital's to buy the latest drug. Money lost. I am here to make history doctor. Not sell the company line. You are far too stuffy and boring for my taste, but we do need you so, I'll overlook it."

Owens couldn't help but roll his eyes.

"Narcissism and vanity get you nowhere Brenner and neither does Megalomania. But those three facets seem to fit you perfectly. You seem to enjoy it too. You enjoy ruining other people's lives don't you?"

Brenner nearly snorted. "It's an acquired taste, but you get used to it after awhile."

Sam pulled a fast one on Brenner. "Well, you were the one that sent your own son into the gate didn't you?"

Brenner flinched slightly, but kept his cool. "He knew what he was getting into when he signed on to this job. He knew the risks. I didn't encourage him to go in through the gate, he wanted to do it all on his own."

Owens wanted to grit his teeth but opted for shaking his head.

"What kind of man would do that to his own child? I wonder about that with you. But you only care about the bottom line. *Power. Greed.* You suffered the loss of your own child in this place, and yet you act as if you don't care. I know a bit about you too Brenner.

Your name is Martin Thomas Brenner. You were born in Augusta, Maine. You have four brothers: Arthur, Max, Jerry and Gary. They all worked at Montauk. I'm pretty sure they still work there. You hinted that it was still operating. You are the oldest of five. Your brothers were all in the Army except you. You went to Johns Hopkins earning your medical degree in 1965. You moved around a lot after you graduated. Worked at various hospitals.

The government approached you one day in 1967 and asked if you wanted to come and work on a special project for them. Enhancing people's brains and expanding their minds. Then came the day you asked El to open up the gate to the Upside down. You had no idea what was beyond that gate. But your curiosity was piqued I guess, so you decided to investigate further. Using that little girl, Jane, for your own gain. Never once thinking about how that would affect her mentally and physically. How many other children are involved in this *Martin*? Huh? 200? 300?"

Rolling his eyes at Owens, Brenner cleared his throat.

"We have a thousand children and counting. 500 girls and 500 boys. All equipped with unique gifts to help us be the first country in the world to have a head start on everything."

Now Sam let out a snort.

"Make that less than a thousand Brenner. Make it 997. Jessica is an adult, but she still has powers, and let me remind you, you did take her as a child."

Brenner clucked his tongue. "You forget Morgan Williamson. She too, is an adult. But she has gifts too. What happened to her again?"

Closing his eyes and opening them again, Owens grit his teeth this

time.

"She bled out. After I helped deliver Rebeca, I noticed several signs that Morgan could die. She wasn't bleeding too much. I thought I'd stopped it. By the time I had gotten back to her room right after finding Ellie, it was already too late."

Brenner paced the room and pointed a finger at Sam.

"That could've easily been fixed with a Hysterectomy."

Sam narrowed his eyes at Brenner.

"You think I don't know that? By the time I got back to her, it was already too late for that. She was fine when I left her four hours earlier."

It was the past and Owens wanted to forget about it. His attention was on Gracie. He was reaching for the arterial line in her neck again.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you doctor. You know what will happen if you do."

But Sam completely ignored Brenner, quickly removing the line giving Gracie serum XB698J6, throwing the iv to the ground next to the bed. He then taped some gauze to the side of her neck and watched her for a minute. His breath caught in his throat when she began to convulse. Reaching for the drawer handle on the stand next to the bed, Sam grabbed for a syringe filled with Phenobarbital. Setting it on the stand, he reached for a syringe filled with saline and flushed the line in Gracie's right hand. He held his breath as he administered the Phenobarbital.

"Come on baby. Come back. Please."

Sam put a hand over his face as he saw her heart rate climb into the 190's.

He glared up at Brenner as he spoke. "Clock's ticking doctor. She's heading for an MI faster than you can snap your fingers. You'd better hurry."

Owens was more than livid right now, he was past that. He didn't know how to describe what he was feeling. His heart seemed to drop to the floor when the machine flat lined and Gracie stilled. He felt like his throat was closing up. Sam shaking his head in denial, stood up from the chair and began CPR on her.

"NO. Don't you leave me baby. We're getting out of here together. I promised. I promised."

Five or six of the thirty MP's converged on the bed and were ready to help Owens. The one closest to him started giving her mouth-to-mouth. Another next to him asked a question.

"Sir, is there anything you would like me to help with?"

Sam kept at the compressions even as he turned his head slightly to the MP next to him.

"Yes. Get me a syringe with Adrenaline. It's in the middle drawer over there inside the counter." The MP nodded and went over towards the drawer opening it. Grabbing for the syringe, the MP also called out another drug they might try.

"Sir, would you like me to get some TPA as well?"

Owens looked up at the MP.

"Just bring anything you can think of over here." As the MP brought over a tray with various syringes filled with different medications in them, Brenner pulled a pistol from one of the MP's next to him and pointed it wildly at all of them.

"All of you are disobeying direct orders. You take orders from me! Not Owens! I will shoot all of you!"

General Martins stepped forward and tried to wrestle the pistol from Brenner, only succeeding in getting shot himself. Brenner, looking genuinely shocked, dropped the gun on the floor. He stood frozen as the other MP's crowded around the general and went about trying to fix his gunshot wound. Martins was lucky, Brenner had gotten him in the shoulder. It could've been his heart.

The injured general pointed a finger at Brenner and shook his head.

"Restrain Brenner and lock him up gentlemen. He's lost his mind. Administer a sedative once he's settled in his new home."

Brenner was protesting at every turn. "You don't understand general, these children are the key to helping us become the best the world has ever seen! We can do anything!"

General Martins only rolled his eyes at Brenner. "The only mistake I made in bringing you into the fold and hiring you was; finding out you were a manipulative, self-absorbed son of a bitch who wanted to gain control of the world with helpless children."

The general added one more comment. "Gentlemen, when you bring him to his new accomadations, put him in hard restraints and give him a sedative. He's obviously had a mental breakdown over losing his son Thomas."

Two MP's who were not tending to the general nodded and cuffed Brenner, dragging him out of the room. He was still trying to persuade them to reconsider.

"You don't understand! We are on the brink of a major breakthrough! I'm your best scientist! You don't need Owens! You have ME!"

Sam switched out with an MP and let him continue with compressions. He asked the MP who'd brought him the tray of syringes his name.

"What's your name soldier?"

The MP shook Owens hand. "Aron Swanson sir. I was a field medic in the army in Vietnam. I delivered several children and treated a young girl a year younger than Gracie here after she lost her leg when a bomb planted in a rice patty went off. I got you two shots of Epinephrine. I figured you might be needing them."

Sam nodded and thanked him.

"Thanks Aron. I appreciate everything your doing for my daughter."

Swanson nodded his own head and jumped in, switching out with the MP that took over for Owens. Owens looked to another MP who was taking down the bags of serum XB698J6.

"I want you to save those. We'll pull them apart later. Set them aside."

Sam turned to another MP at the foot of the bed.

"You. Get me the paddles."

The MP at the foot of the bed seemed confused.

"Sir?"

Repeating himself, Owens pointed towards the corner of the room.

"The paddles to shock her heart. There over by the ventilator in the corner."

The MP acknowledging Sam, brought over the defibrillator. He was about to clear all the MP's away when the one giving Gracie compressions did it for him.

"Everybody clear!"

Owens said his daughter's name as if it were a prayer.

"Gracie Louise Owens, come back now. Come back to daddy."

He flinched as electricity from the paddles on the defibrillator went into Gracie's tiny chest. The MP holding the paddles just above Gracie's chest shook his head.

"Still no change doc. Still Asystole. Give her a shot of Epi or go again?"

Sam pointed to the paddles.

"Go again. This time try 60."

Standing the foot of the bed, Owens saw Gracie's body jump with electricity. He held his breath as the lines on the machine started beeping.

"We've got a heart beat doc."

Another MP next to Sam at the foot of the bed looked him in the eye.

"Sir, she's had an accident."

Owens nodded but looked at the urine bag on the floor.

"She's got a catheter in. It's perfectly normal for someone who's having a seizure to lose control of their bodily functions."

The MP shook his head.

"No doc. Not that kind of accident. The other kind."

Realization dawned on Sam's face.

"It's ok. We'll clean her up and give her a sponge bath. She'll be fine."

Owens felt nauseous all of a sudden and went for the first plastic container he could find, emptying his stomach. He felt a hand on his shoulder.

Looking up, he found it was Swanson.

"Easy sir. Do you want me to get anything for you?"

Shaking his head, Sam stayed where he was at, head hanging over the plastic container in front of him.

"No I'll be fine. Thanks. How's General Martin's doing?"

Swanson took a glance over at him and gave a smile.

"He's going to be just fine sir. The bullet went clear through his shoulder. Minimal blood loss. He only needed a few stitches."

At that admission, Owens sighed in relief.

"This could've been a lot worse. Thank you for saving my daughter."

Sam kept looking at Swanson, lowering his voice.

"Wait, you guys are the fifteen that were working with Garson weren't you? Your going to get us out of here."

Swanson looked around and nodded.

"Yes, but we've still got to sway a few more guys. You have my word. I kept my promise to Garson before he died."

Owens gave a small smile.

"Perhaps we are relishing in temporary victory after all."

To Be Continued...

16. Changes in Management

Chapter 16: Changes in Management

Author: zeusfluff.

Disclaimer: I do not own any of the Stranger Thing's characters. But I do own a few originals. Date Started: 9/28/19. Date Finished: 10/4/19. Enjoy!

Hopper had seen all the comotion happening next door and pressed the call button on the wall above his bed. "Doc, what's going on in there?"

The police chief could see Sam losing his dinner in a plastic bin in his lap. He saw an MP hand him a radio. "We're alright Jim. Everything is under control now. How's El doing?"

Hopper looked back at El, she was sleeping soundly, for now at least. "Still sleeping doc. The monitors say she's stable. How's Gracie?"

Seeing him swallow, Hopper listened to Owens speak. "She's better now. Thanks. I'm close to figuring out what that coffee colored serum is. We'll talk later."

Sam handed the radio back to Swanson. His attention was averted from the plastic bin in his lap when the door opened and in walked someone he hadn't seen in awhile. "Jeff? What are you doing here?"

Doctor Jeffrey Canton was Owens brother-in-law. He and his sister had met in Central Park and fell in love. Canton smiled at Owens and took his hand, shaking it. "Sam. Good to see you. Looks like you lost your dinner. Everything good now?"

Sam nodded. "Yes, but that still doesn't answer my question."

Jeff put a hand on Owens shoulder. "They said a child needed my help. Gracie. What's she doing here?"

Owens put the plastic bin aside and his head landed in his hands. Looking back up at Jeff, his voice shook. "She was kidnapped. I suppose you've heard of Martin Brenner if your here Jeff."

Jeff nodded his head seriously. "I have, and he's a Megalomaniac. Where is he anyways? I'd love to give him a piece of my mind."

Sam gave a slight chuckle. "Well, you won't have to. He's been locked up and sedated. He's out of his mind. How's my sister?"

Jeff pulled something from his pocket and gave it to Owens. "Sam, I would like you to meet your niece, Anne."

Fingering the grainy black and white photo, he got tears in his eyes. "Jeff you know my sister can't go through natural childbirth. She'll need to have a C-section. Her bone structure. Who's she staying with?"

Jeff took Sam by his shoulders and gave them a pat. "No worries Sam. She's with your mother."

Now Owens was really worried. "You left her with ma Jeff? You do realize Erin shouldn't be climbing 10 flights of stairs. Ma lives on the tenth floor of an apartment building in The Bronx."

It was Jeff's turn to shake his head. "Actually, your mother lives on the first floor now. When the previous tenant passed, she jumped on the opportunity to get that apartment."

Sam sighed slightly relieved but that still didn't make him feel better about his sister. "How is her pregnancy going? Any problems?"

Jeff smiled. "Nothing we couldn't handle Sam. She's due in two weeks."

Taking a breath, Owens tried to keep himself calm. "Ok, we'll get back to Erin later. Right now, our focus is on Gracie. I want you to have a look at all her brain scans from the past month, see if you can point anything out I may have missed."

Taking a stool, Jeff slid up next to Sam and took a breath, putting his professional mask on. "Ok Sam, what do you got for me?"

Owens placed all of Gracie's brain scans out on the table. "Her brain patterns have slowly been changing. As do the frequency of her seizures."

Jeff stopped Sam for a moment. "Seizures? How many?"

Owens trying to push down his fear and stay in professional mode, glared at the pile of serum XB698J6 lying haphazardly across the countertop fifty feet from them. "She's been given a massive amount of that coffee colored substance on the counter called Serum XB698J every day for the past month. It's increased her brain function by 500% every time. It's making her gifts stronger, but making her weaker. When she uses her powers, it drains her. For a couple of weeks she's completely quadrapelagic. Like right now, she cannot move. As for the seizures, she's been having at least six or seven a day. Today we've moved up to eight. At first they only lasted about forty seconds. Now we're almost up to four minutes. I don't know how much more her body or her brain can take Jeff. What do you make of this?"

Jeff could only stare at Sam for what seemed like forever before he answered. "Gracie must've lost hundreds of brain cells. What I'm seeing as I look at all these scans is, her brain stem has been thickening. Almost like its evolving. This serum, whatever it is, is hurting her. Is there a way of getting it out of her system?"

Owens grit his teeth. "The only way to find that out Jeff is to go and ask Brenner himself. But its doubtful he'll even be remotely helpful. He's insane."

Sam added one more thing. "She also had a heart attack."

Jeff turned to him in disbelief. "Sam, she's seven. Too young for that."

But Owens pointed towards an ultrasound machine. "There's only one way to find out how bad it was by looking with the ultrasound Jeff. Come on."

An MP rolled the ultrasound machine towards the pair of doctors and Canton nodded to him. "Thank you."

Sam attempted to set Gracie up in the bed a little, but found that he couldn't lift her up. "Oh my god Gracie. You weigh a ton. You only weigh 55 pounds."

Now it was Jeff's turn to try. "Now I know your joking. You can lift more than 55 pounds Sam. Oh my god. You aren't kidding. What are you feeding this kid?"

Owens let his eyes wander to the serum on the counter top. "It's the Osmium in the serum. It's making her heavier than she really is. After all, its the densest element on Earth."

Jeff scratched his head and turned on the machine. Sam smoothed some hair from Gracie's eyes and kissed her forehead. "Uncle Jeff and daddy are going to make you all better."

The two doctors now had their eyes glued to the screen on the machine. Jeff pointed to Gracie's heart with his left index finger. "There's a little bit of scar tissue here in her right ventricle. Other than that, her heart looks just fine. Heart rate has slowed a bit, which is concerning."

This made Sam worry. "It's the Osmium in the serum. It's crushing her from the inside out. Compressing all of her organs, which will eventually fail."

Owens looked at the bag hanging on the side of the bed. Sighing he looked at Gracie. "Kidney stones. Baby I'm sorry."

A hand landed on Sam's shoulder. He turned to find that it was General Martins. "We were seeing the same results in soldiers doctor. The symptoms are only going to get worse. But I do have something here that can reverse it."

Taking a syringe from his pocket, he handed it to Owens. "What is it General?"

General Martins pointed to the syringe. "It's a 'cure.' We've been working on *that* for a very long time. At first, the soldiers were showing promise. It was working on them. But then we found out that the serum was only crushing them from the inside out. Six

suffered from heart failure. Eight had collapsed lungs. Twelve suffered strokes. Another sixteen went blind. All of these symptoms were permanent. Forty two. At first. But within the next two years, it went from forty two to over a thousand."

Sam wasn't totally convinced of General Martins explanation. "What exactly were you trying to do to these soldiers?"

Sighing, General Martins jut a thumb towards the pile of serum on the counter top. "They were supposed to become human armor. Their bodies were supposed to become harder than the shell of a turtle. It was never meant for children. Their bodies are too pliable. Their still maturing. While in adults, they seem to absorb the serum much better than the children. Their bodies seem to adapt."

Owens let his eyes wander the El in the next room. "There's a thirteen year old girl in the next room. She's been given the serum too. Is it possible to give her the cure too?"

General Martins shook his head and placed a few bags filled with the 'cure' on top of the counter. "Unfortunately for Eleven, it won't reverse her powers if that's what your thinking. She was exposed to her mother's power's when she was still inside her mother's womb. It will however reverse the effects the Osmium has on her body."

Sam felt like this was a small victory with this change in management. But could he really trust General Martins? He hoped those fifteen soldiers that helped Gracie had a plan to get them out soon. This place was starting to wear him down. Much like it was Hopper.

To Be Continued...